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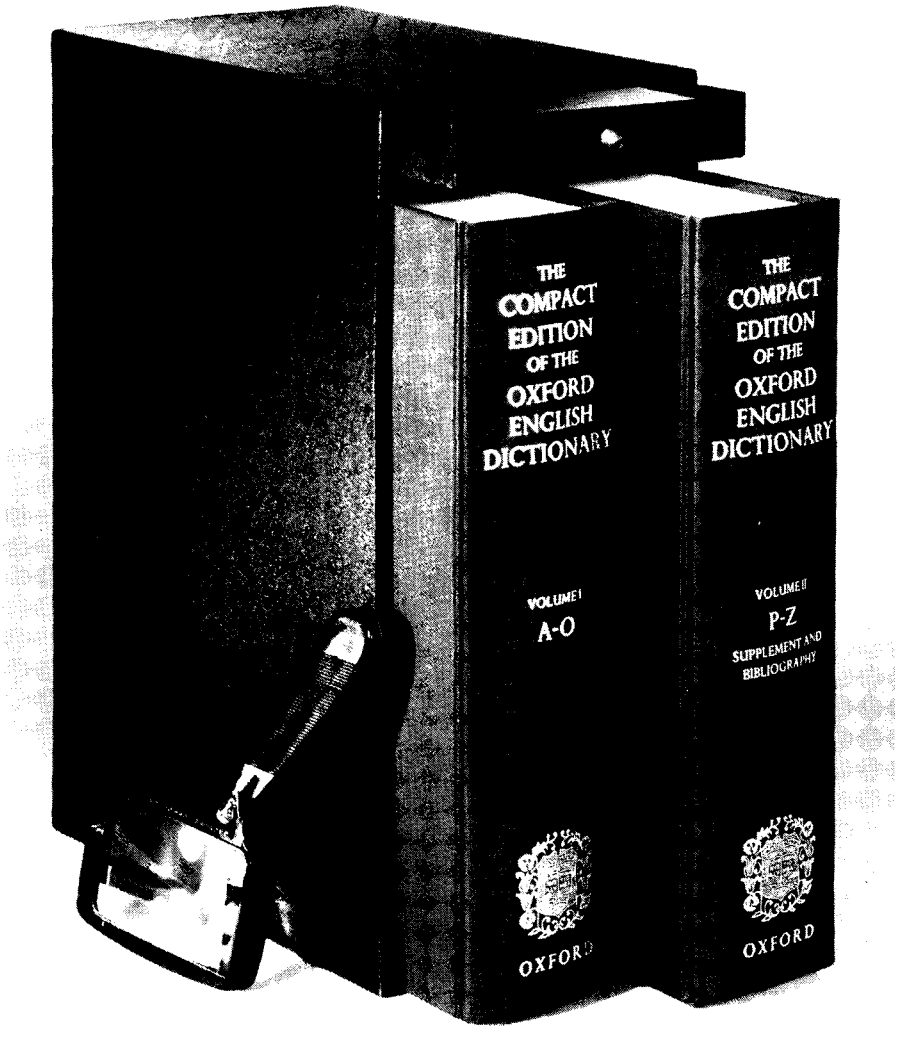

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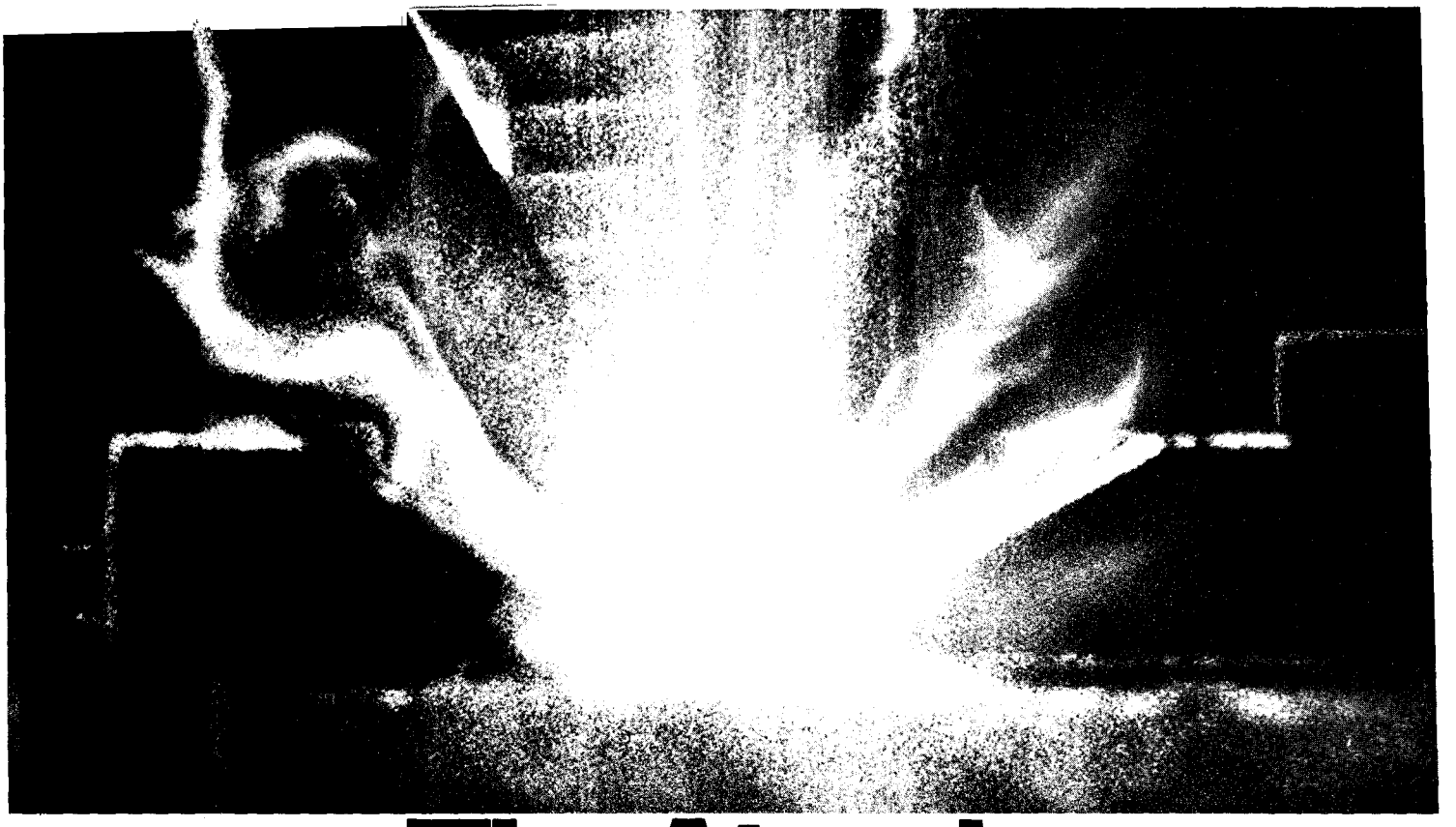

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LETTERS

Foundation Foibles

As one of the co-founders of the Guthrie Theatre, I was appalled to see the number of factual errors in Martin Gottfried's article ["Risk-Taking at the Guthrie," September 2].

It would take too long to correct all the inaccuracies; suffice it to say that no monies whatsoever were provided by the Ford Foundation for the construction of the theater—it was all raised locally. The plan for the establishment of a large classical repertory theater was first discussed with W. McNeil Lowry, then vice president of the Ford Foundation, only after a year and a half of planning. Neither then, nor after the Ford Foundation provided us with an initial operating grant, did the foundation attempt to influence our artistic choices or policies.

Peter Zeisler, Director
Theatre Communications Group
New York, N.Y.

Martin Gottfried replies: Mr. Zeisler does not mention that his Theatre Communications Group is a regional theater servicing organization created and financed by the Ford Foundation. He does not mention that, in the first 10 years of the Guthrie Theater's existence, Ford gave it $1,207,000. This was "building" the Guthrie, not exclusively, not literally, but in the most meaningful sense. Zeisler does not mention Mr. Lowry's boast that "the Ford Foundation served as the focus of experiment for... the repertory theater movement." Nor does Zeisler mention his own letter to *The New York Times* in October of 1969 in which he said, "Does... anyone think for a minute that the resident theaters could have developed without foundation support?"

The Silent Minority Speaks

I read with interest Carll Tucker's Back Door ["The Bureaucrats vs. the Rest of Us," September 16]. After five years of being in the civil service, I have observed that, in spite of exceptions, civil servants represent probably the only minority in the U.S. whom it is permissible, even popular, to criticize. Further, since many of the civil-service workers are accustomed to being maligned, maltreated, and underpaid, they are not likely to respond, much less to object.

People on the top of the civil service ladder have often acquired their positions through various means, and they enjoy money, power, and the authority to harass the people on the bottom. Those far down the ladder often work for salaries of around $7,000. Many of them try to take tests, get on lists, take courses. Lists are variable and subject to whim and interpretation. Tests must be made up in a root cellar by a robot.

Civil servants—what a term!—whom I know work very hard; they seem to be imbued with a driving wish to get the work done well. I know some, too, who have no hope left. Their only course is passive resistance. I wish that civil-service workers would speak up with pride and demand the same treatment that their taxes make possible for others. People who work *for the public* deserve status, respect, and pay. They do not deserve harassment from people who could not endure in these important, necessary, and thankless jobs.

Ruth O'Grady Hart
Pleasantville, N.Y.

Scaling the Peaks

Tad Szulc's pessimistic observations on the descent from the Bonn summit ["Dollar Dolors: Carter Bombs at Bonn," September 16] reflect a misreading of international economic traces.

Those who focus on only the immediate signs can easily lose a sense of direction to the longer course. Just over two months have passed since the leaders of the world's major industrialized nations conferred at the economic summit. And, admittedly, they left at least three high peaks to be reached: faster, relatively noninflationary European recovery from the 1974-5 world recession; a comprehensive U.S. energy program; and redress of Japan's sizable trade imbalance with the United States. But too much of a twisted trail remains to be traversed to declare after only an initial mile that President Carter is aimlessly off course. We must wait to see how he, Congress, the Europeans, and the Japanese come out.

John S. McClenahen
Falls Church, Va.

Tad Szulc replies: U.S. government officials are the first to admit that thus far we have failed in the Bonn commitments on inflation and energy conservation. There are no immediate signs of improvement in these areas.

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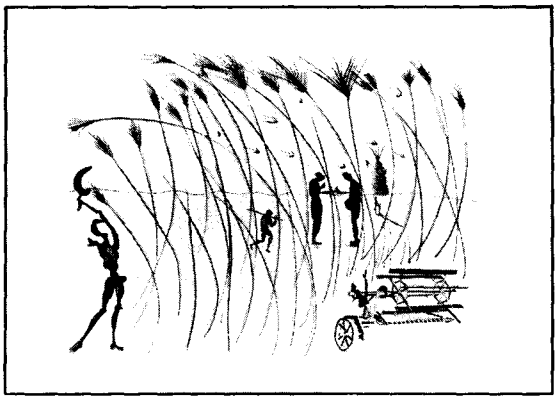

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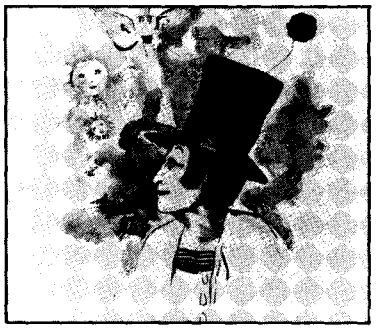

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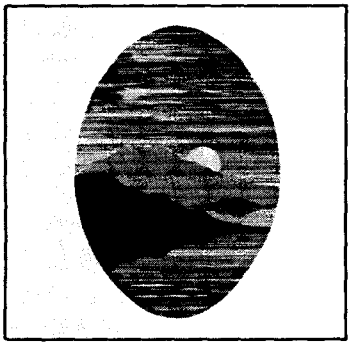

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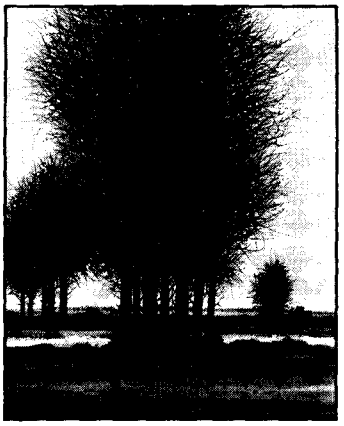

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CORRECTION

Editor's note: It is Fabergé and not Revlon which created the perfume Babe and retained Margaux Hemingway to demonstrate its charms. In his article "A Matter of Dollars and Scents" [Sept. 30] James Brady committed the inadvertent blunder. He blames it on the heady scents and beautiful women to whom he was exposed during his research.

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER 28 PUZZLES

WIT TWISTER No. 129 (page 62)
craven, cavern, carven

FRASER YOUNG LITERARY CRYPT No. 118 (page 62) I am a believer in punctuality though it makes me very lonely.
—E. V. Lucas

MIDDLETON DOUBLE-CROSTIC No. 158 (page 63)
Alice Martin Lester: "Autumn Trio"/Subtle/September is/a siren who can lure/most any man to take a fling/outdoors./ Gaudy/October tints/ her lips with bittersweet,/ and even old men vie for her/ last glance./Naive/November nods/ and drops her eyes. Men call/at night to sit and sup beside/ her fire.
From Alice Martin Lester: *Prelude to Midnight*

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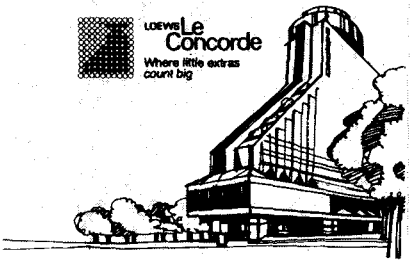

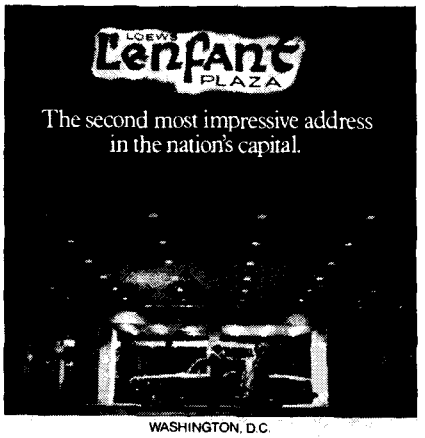

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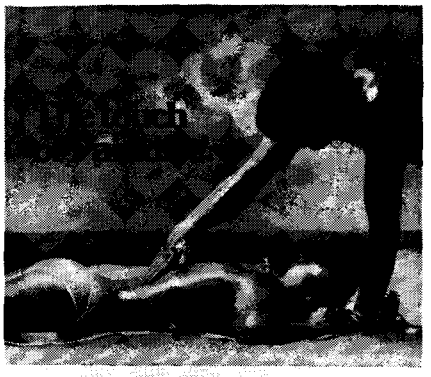

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Some Like It Hot, Some Not

Certain problems seem to evade every effort of human genius. Gnats. The common cold. Junk mail. And the coyote. Undaunted by traps, poison, and shotguns, coyotes continue to dine on lamb chops without the decency to purchase them from the butcher like the rest of us. Now some blithe genius—a relation, no doubt, of the one who first applied garlic to bitten nails—has hit on the idea of tampering with the coyotes' favorite food, rather than with the coyotes.

The solution comes in the form of a $150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the University of Wyoming to develop—this is absolutely on the level—synthetic Tabasco to spray on sheep. Tests have shown that coyotes, like the English, prefer their game unspiced. The predators will presumably pass up curried mutton in favor of prairie dog *nature*. At least until one of them invents a synthetic mint sauce.

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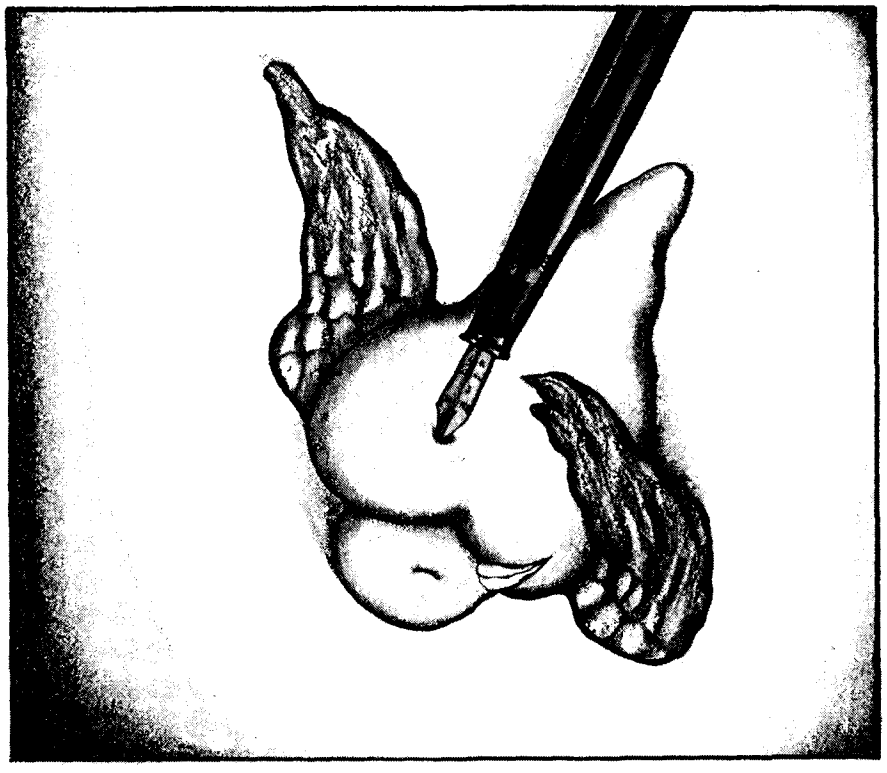
Alexa Grace



Unwed Contract

They say that romance is dead. Well, it's true. The demolition began with divorce insurance, which coolly recognizes the mortality of nuptial vows by indemnifying both parties against one another's claims once the marriage hits the skids. And now the coup de grace has been delivered by the UnMarriage Contract, which furnishes the same bulwark for those in a "living together arrangement."

The contract "delineates just what belongs to whom, defines property rights of parties entering into a live-together relationship, and spells out the contributions of each person to the household." It retails for a paltry $24.95, and, once notarized, legally protects unmarried couples from the sort of alimony settlements that they would try to gouge out of one another once the fun and games turned sour. The contract's peddlers point out threateningly that actor Lee Marvin has already shelled out half a million dollars to his estranged tootsie. It could happen to you.

Apple Pie Gets Cut

Someone finally had the moxie to vote *against* children. In early August Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-Arizona) knocked out of an appropriations bill the $1.3 million budget of the National Commission of the Year of the Child. Said DeConcini, "I am in favor of motherhood, apple pie, and children, but this is ridiculous."

What struck the lawmaker as ridiculous was that the budget consisted wholly of such overhead costs as personnel ($460,000, including two positions at $47,500), and travel ($140,000). Exactly how this expenditure was supposed to help kids was not specified.

Immediately after the decision was announced, the commission hastily drew up a list of specific objectives in order to persuade the Senator to reverse his decision. Instead, they drove the last nail into their coffin. The first specific goal —and an earth-shattering one at that — was to "Encourage families in local communities to assume responsibility for the well-being of their children." The other objectives were framed in equally mercurial prose. That convinced the Senator, who is trying to make a reputation for himself as a budget-cutter, not to restore the item.

The last round of funding comes up in January, and the commission is already hard at work on a new statement of purpose. If they blow it again the United States could become a nonparticipant in the International Year of the Child.

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Martine Beaudert

Our Father, Who Art in Flour

The Lord of Hosts, whose immanence in the wafer has been pretty hotly maintained, has apparently branched out into ethnic foods. In what is perhaps a form of ecumenicism, He has revealed himself, according to the Mexican farmers of tiny Lake Arthur, New Mexico, on a tortilla.

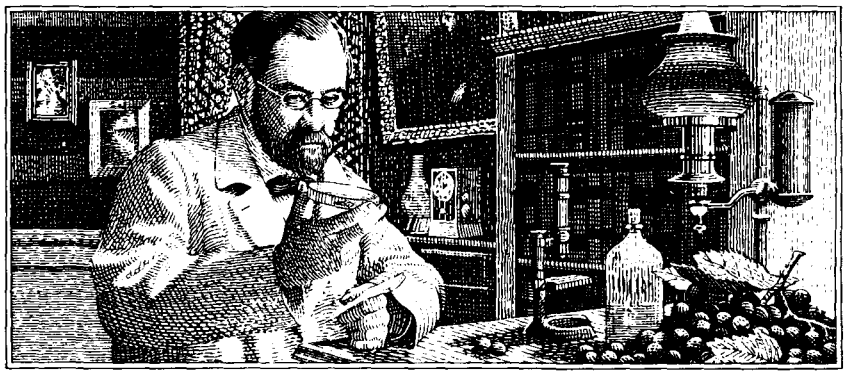
"I was rolling my husband's burrito," Mrs. Eduardo Rubio told a *Los Angeles Times* reporter, "and on the last roll I noticed something that looked like a face." The burn marks from the skillet had arrayed themselves into a striking semblance of the long-haired, mournful figure of the shroud of Turin.

Today "Jesus on a tortilla," as Mrs. Rubio aptly calls it, sits in a separate room of the Rubios' home among flowers and votive candles. Tortilla-worshippers have come by the thousands, many having trekked from New York and the Midwest. Most apparently agree with Mrs. Rubio that "this sign means Christ will return to earth."

Local religious authorities are less enthusiastic about the apparent manifestation. The Rev. Joyce Finnigan, the Franciscan priest who reluctantly blessed the tortilla, remarked, "I'm not too impressed with that kind of miracle." Rev. Finnigan notes that revelations of this variety are "not uncommon" in the area, with Christ having been glimpsed recently on a stone, in Christmas vestments, and gazing serenely from a cloud.

SR 11·11·78

Fermentation: The miracle that turns the juice of the grape into wine.



Although it is an oft-proclaimed truth that fine wine is a living, growing thing, nowhere is this more evident than during that critical, and still somewhat mysterious, process called fermentation.

Yeast: The Catalyst

It is possible that a quantity of fine grapes crushed and left to themselves in an open container will, in time, ferment and yield an acceptable wine.

It is probable, however, that these same grapes will yield a wine not so pleasant.

Which it will become depends in large measure on the vagaries of simple, one-celled plants called yeasts which are found naturally in the bloom on the skins of grapes.

A Louis Pasteur Discovery

Until 1864, wine-making was a matter of uncertainty. But then Louis Pasteur discovered that these yeasts were, indeed, the agents that caused fermentation.

Equally important, he discovered that specific strains with desirable characteristics could be isolated and substituted for the wild yeast in the wine-making process, a major step toward predictable excellence.

Today, our winemakers are devoted to the study of yeasts and to their improvement. Because no one yeast works equally well in every case, we are constantly striving to isolate the ideal yeast for the different varieties of wines.

This development of the specific yeast which maximizes a grape's natural flavor potential is a primary study we have pursued for years.

To achieve a wine of predictable excellence year after year, we developed the first successful dehydration of pure wine yeast. The dehydrated form maintains the consistent purity from year to year and provides us with a "cleaner" wine that is truer in flavor and fragrance to the grape.

Some Like It Cold

During fermentation, heat is created. If we permit the fermenting juice or "must" to attain a temperature of only ninety degrees, the yeast can be injured. At one-hundred degrees, most yeast will die.

Over the years, we have developed precise cooling methods for keeping the fermenting liquid at the optimum lower temperature. This varies from grape to grape. For example, the Sauvignon Blanc, French Colombard, Chenin Blanc, Riesling or Chardonnay we use for our white wines are far more delicate and sensitive to temperature than their more robust red cousins.

We determined that fermenting them at a cooler temperature slows the change from juice to wine and results in protecting the delicacy of the resultant wine.

In this cooled state, the juice can ferment as long as fourteen days rather than three or four.

The Test Fermentation

Knowing the precise moment to draw the wine is a combination of the skill and art of our winemakers.

In some cases we actually take grape samples a few days before harvest and, on a small scale, proceed with fermentation. This gives us a preview of what to expect, and, we then make whatever adjustments necessary to produce the most consistently excellent wine.

Our Purpose

The precise control of fermentation is but one of the many steps which our winemakers have mastered in order to achieve our goal. Here at the winery of Ernest and Julio Gallo, our purpose is to bring you the finest wine that skill and care can produce.

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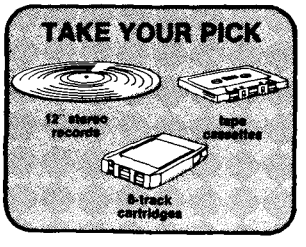

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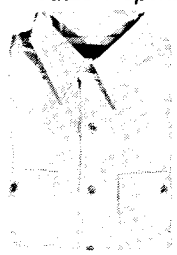

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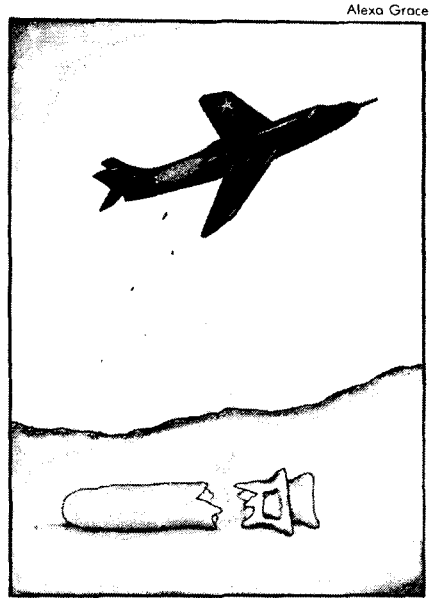

One endangered species whose passing no one will mourn is smallpox, whose official extinction the World Health Organization hopes to announce in October 1979. By that date the only smallpox left in the world will be stabled in high-security laboratories. And there's the rub. WHO has asked the 75 labs that have virus samples to either destroy them or turn them over to one of four designated holders; most have cooperated; but a demurral, though not a refusal, has already come from at least one formidable institution—the U.S. Army.

Intransigence over smallpox samples was not a matter of much public concern until September 11, when Janet Parker, photographer at the medical school of the University of Birmingham, in England, died of the disease. Although the source of the infection has yet to be traced, inadequate security measures seem to be at fault. Which, of course, was precisely WHO's point when it began its campaign to consolidate viral stocks in 1976. Indeed, the death might accelerate the campaign. "The fact that this can happen is a warning to all laboratories," notes a WHO spokesman.

The Army, however, is unfazed. Its Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) did not respond to WHO's request that it transfer or destroy its stocks, though it has not refused to do so. Nor has the recent death shaken their resolve.

What does USAMRIID want with smallpox virus in the first place? Officials claim that they need it "for diagnostic purposes," as might any research lab, and they fear that WHO's designated American holder, the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, might lose its supply.

An entirely less savory interpretation is that USAMRIID is holding on to the virus for research into biological warfare, which the United States forswore in 1969. WHO consultant John Richardson told *Science* magazine that "the only reason to have smallpox virus is for offensive purposes."

Army officials deny the allegations (Richardson claims he was misquoted), and point out that smallpox is too easily neutralized by vaccination to make it a serious military weapon. On the other hand, the success of WHO's eradication campaign would make vaccination unnecessary, thus leaving a vulnerable population.

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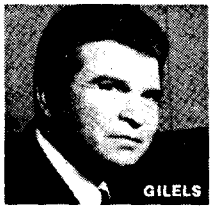

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SATURDAY REVIEW: OUTLOOKS

Editorial: Militarism in Higher Education

WITH VERY little fanfare or public discussion, the Department of Defense is giving serious consideration to a plan for involving itself in a massive way in American higher education.

Underlying this situation is an incontestable fact: Most American colleges and universities are in trouble today because their enrollments are sharply down and their expenses are sharply up. The baby boom of the Forties and Fifties led to a broad expansion of college classrooms and facilities, both on the graduate and undergraduate levels. More recently, however, the ratio of teenagers in our society has dropped precipitately as a result of the steady decline in the nation's birthrate.

The reason for the Pentagon's interest is fairly uncomplicated. The military now finds itself in vigorous competition with colleges and universities for the nation's youth. Eighteen-year-olds are at a premium. The Pentagon wants to be sure it will get its share.

The plan being developed by the defense department does not envisage a head-on struggle with the colleges. Just the opposite. It is preparing to propose a "partnership" with higher education, offering the financial help the colleges so desperately need. In return for providing facilities and tuition assistance, the Pentagon would have the opportunity to provide military training. It seems unreasonable to believe, however, that the influence of the military would stop here. Inevitably, military support would have an effect on the entire philosophy of higher education.

The interest of the military in this direction was signaled some months ago in Los Angeles in a talk given by Thomas Carr, Director of Defense Education for the Department of Defense. Mr. Carr began his talk by calling attention to the implications of the fact that the United States is running short of 18-year-olds. He came to his point quickly:

"Assuming the nation will need to maintain an active-duty military force of about 2.1 million, then in the next five to 10 years... the military must recruit more than one out of three male 18-year-olds."

Mr. Carr forecasts that by 1984 (the year has special significance in Orwellian terms) most of the skills required by the armed forces will be nonmilitary in nature. These "attractive and worthwhile" opportunities in various forms of military service will be, he believes, appealing to 18-year-olds, who will by that time be facing increased competition from experienced workers.

Against this background, Mr. Carr offers six predictions.

First, that what would appear to be a pitched battle between the military and the colleges for 18-year-olds can be avoided very simply by having the military and the colleges join together in a series of "cooperative ventures." The implication is clear that since the military has the money it will be able to keep the colleges out of bankruptcy. Prospects for recruiting will increase.

Second, Mr. Carr predicts that students will benefit from the natural advantages offered by the military's system of education. Evaluation in civilian schools, he says, is made on a comparative basis. This means that some students are bound to suffer, not because of their own inherent weaknesses, but because of the strengths of their classmates. By contrast, Mr. Carr says, under the military little attention is paid to relative performance, while substantial attention is paid to the student's ability to perform a task successfully. Such an education, he says, will give students assurance of learning valuable skills and getting a job.

Third, Mr. Carr anticipates that "by 1984, given the involvement of such a large proportion of our young people with military service, the military will have become a major instrument for youth socialization." In this connection, Mr. Carr feels that the military will be able to "remedy deficiencies" accumulated by many youngsters in secondary schools. The nature of these deficiencies is not defined by Carr.

Fourth, Mr. Carr forecasts that our military bases around the world will be fully used in the new program. He foresees a situation in which satellites will transmit teaching materials prepared by the colleges to remote areas overseas.

Mr. Carr's fifth prediction is that education will become the means whereby the military will be able to recruit "especially qualified personnel." According to his plan, undergraduates in schools that do not offer ROTC programs will be offered commissions after two periods of summer training if they meet the appropriate qualifications. The effect, he says, will be to cut "lead time required to produce officers."

The final prediction is that the armed forces will become the largest degree-granting institution in the world.

Mr. Carr recognizes that the widespread involvement of the military in education will not be without problems. He does not gloss over the fact that civilian education puts its emphasis on "creativity, improvement of the human condition, and preservation of cherished social values," whereas the military stresses "obedience, established procedures and hierarchy, and has little interest in a more abstract search for purer knowledge." Another characteristic of the military, he says, is that it emphasizes "competence and performance regardless of how achieved...." But he concludes that the challenge is how to "combine the best features of training and education to produce both better performers and better human beings."

It is not necessary to invent specters. Mr. Carr is the top education officer of the Pentagon. His own words make it apparent that the heavy military involvement in American higher education is not a bogey conjured up by an overheated imagination. He himself says that the military will assume "a large portion of the role once dominated by the family, the church, the school, and the civilian work setting."

The basic question arising from Mr. Carr's notions is whether the American people are going to be spectators to the process. Mr. Carr says nothing about the effect of the program on the philosophy of a free society. There was no consideration in his speech of the violation of traditional democratic procedures. According to his plan, the military would arrogate to itself the right to appropriate or spend funds—a right that, under the Constitution, is a function of the Congress. The American military already has unobstructed access to American tax dollars. It is now proposed that this access be used to establish a military presence of dominant proportions on the American campus.

Few things are more perilous to a free society than the institutionalization of security. We need to remind ourselves that ancient Sparta, which became synonymous with militarism in all its aspects, was once the most creative of all the Greek States. —N.C.

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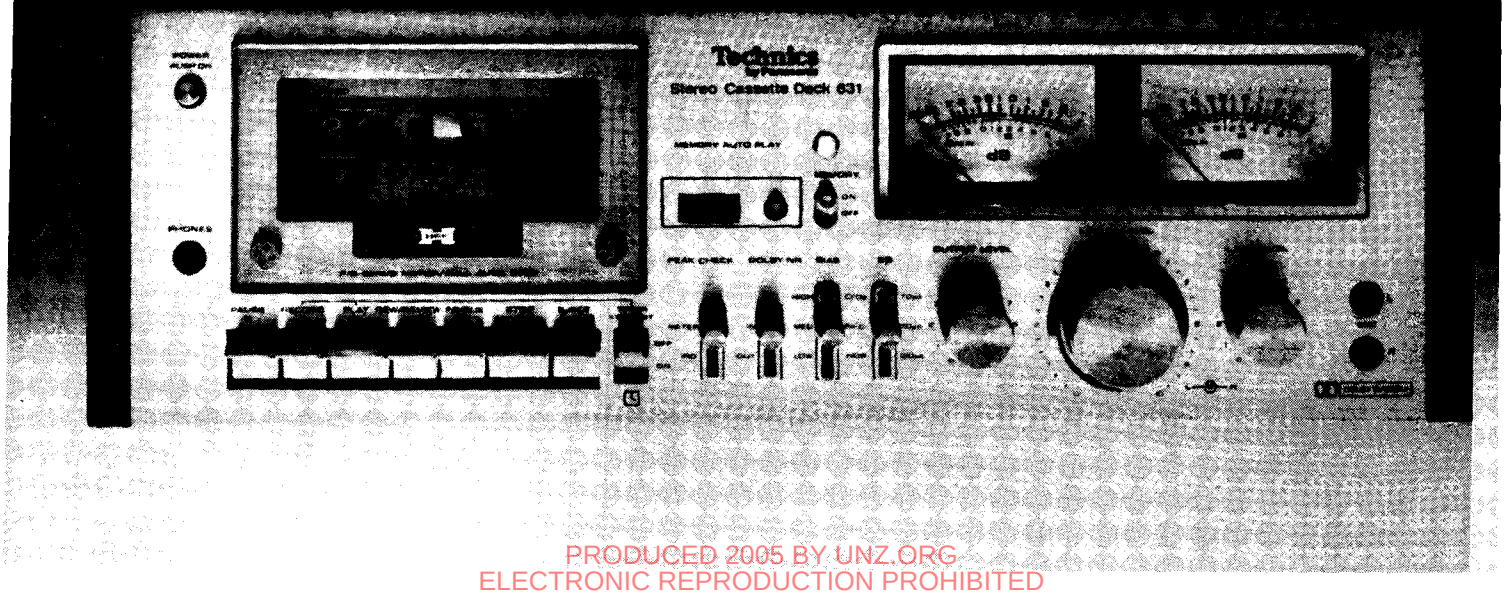

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LIGHT REFRACTIONS

Myths Die Hard

by Thomas H. Middleton

YOU KNOW WHO Jack Smith is if you're lucky enough to get a newspaper that carries his syndicated column. He's one of the few columnists who can write about absolutely anything and, whether his topic is one that would ordinarily interest me or not, have me hooked from the opening sentence to the last period. So when he threw some words of praise for me into one of his columns in the *Los Angeles Times*, it started my day off with a special glow, in spite of the fact that I was awakened by a well-meaning friend who called before 7 AM to ask if I'd seen Smith's column yet.

It is with the utmost respect that I take issue with the one tiny dig Mr. Smith took at me amid the kudos. He quoted a line of mine, "There are millions who don't give a tinker's damn about English grammar," and he added,"(By the way, Middleton, that dam is spelled without an n.)"

Four years ago, I wrote a column in which I tried to lay to rest the folk etymology that claims a tinker's damn is really a piece of dough called a tinker's dam which tinkers used to employ to keep solder from running wild.

The fact is that tinkers were notorious for their use of ungenteel language, and not surprisingly. A tinker was usually an itinerant worker whose job was mending pots and pans and whose tools were things like tin snips, hammers, solder, hot irons, and a fire which he presumably excited from time to time with a bellows.

It is an established fact that the average man cannot hang three pictures on a wall in one evening without hammering at least one finger and uttering at least three unseemly expletives. Given the fact that tinkers were not, as a rule, drawn from the clergy, even the most experienced of them, working with the sort of tools they used, trying to mend other people's kitchenware, must have earned a reputation for turning the air somewhat blue. Such admonitions as "Don't go near the tinker while he's working, Betsy, dear!" must have been commonplace.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* says outright, "The low repute in which these, esp. the itinerant sort, were held in former times is shown by the expressions *to swear like a tinker, a tinker's curse* or *damn, as drunk* or *as quarrelsome as a tinker*, etc." OED adds that the "piece of dough" theory is "an ingenious but baseless conjecture."

That "piece-of-dough-tinker's dam" misunderstanding had its origins on the afternoon of May 24, 1873. An amateur etymologist named Neville Euphemy was watching a tinker at work. When he saw the tinker place a small wall of dough around the area he was about to solder, Euphemy asked what the piece of dough was for. The tinker replied, "Dat damn ting is ta keep da blippin solder fum runnin all over da blippin place." Euphemy, delighted, cried, "By Jove! That *dam* thing! Of course! *That* is a tinker's dam!"

Thus, a spurious bit of etymological trivia took root, flourishing to this day.

Back to Jack Smith. Speaking of folk etymology, it was he who punctured the notion that *posh* is derived from the ways of British travelers who, planning a trip to India via Suez, and wanting to be on the cooler, northern side of the ship, specified "Port out, starboard home," or POSH.

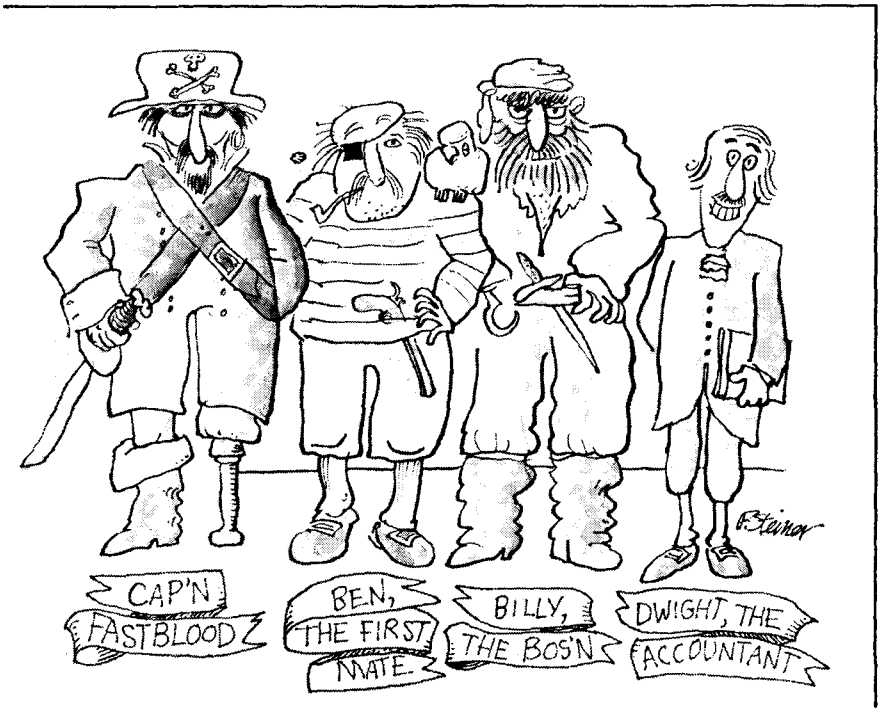
To my ear, that has always had a phony ring. But when Smith said, in a series of columns, that considerable research had not come up with a single instance of anyone's ever having used *Port out, starboard home* or POSH as a designation for travel accommodations, he evidently got letters from dozens of angry readers whose pet conversational gambit he had shot down.

It's my opinion that *posh* came into being in the same way as *slosh* and *slush*, *gooey* and *icky*, *zippy*, *nifty*, *jake*, and dozens of other words. They sounded apt and they were close in feeling to other words expressing close to the same thing. When used in a context that made them sound right and in which they were immediately understood, they were picked up, disseminated, and became part of the language. I suspect that there's no way of determining precisely how or why it happens. *Posh* is possibly related to *polish*, *cushy*, *pompous*—you name it.

If POSH, for Port out, starboard home, actually did appear on India-bound steamer trunks (and it is still conceivable that it did), it is not unlikely that a close relative of Neville Euphemy saw it and, delighted, said, "By Jove! Posh! So *that's* where the word comes from!"

And another conversational gambit was born.

I've been thinking. Pricking everyone's favorite folk-etymological balloons is a good way to lose friends and alienate people, and, since those colorful balloons are quite harmless, ignore everything you've just read. ◉



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By Alvin Tresselt, Dean of Faculty

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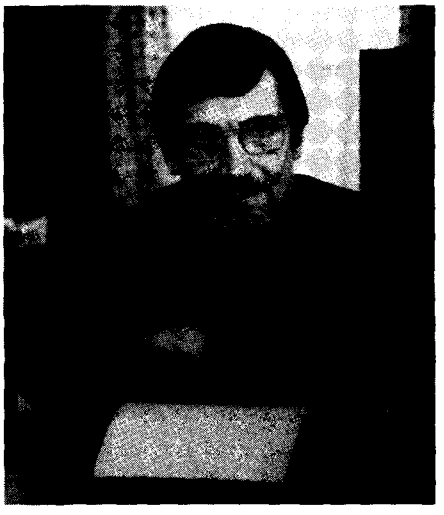

Alvin Tresselt was Vice President and Executive Editor of Parents' Magazine Press, the first editor of *Humpty Dumpty's Magazine for Children*, and has served on the board of the Author's Guild. His 53 books for young readers have sold over two million copies.

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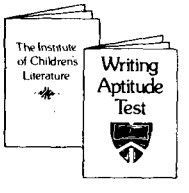

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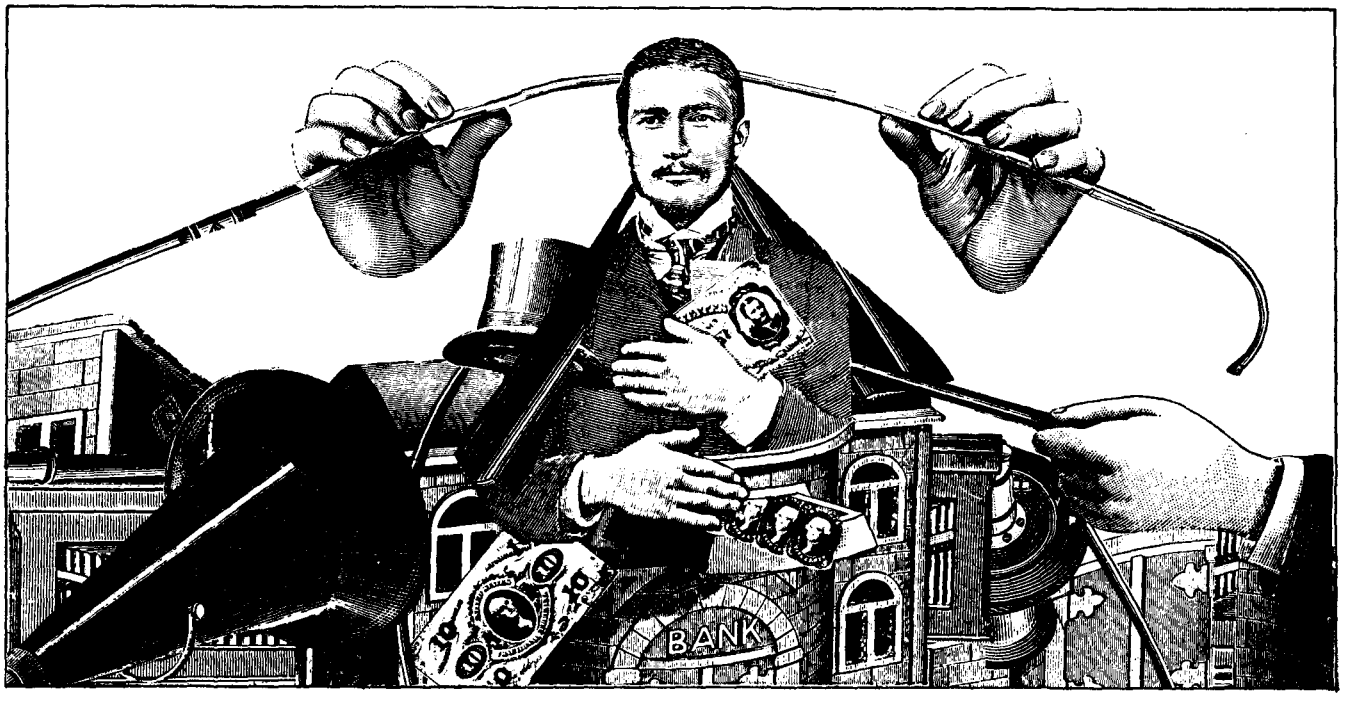

Shareholder Power

A Swift Kick in the Corporate Shins

by James Traub

WHEN CITICORP announced in its proxy statement this past spring that it would no longer make loans to the South African government, the giant bank tactfully avoided mention of the arm-twisting it had suffered before reaching a decision. When other major banks—Chemical, First National of Chicago, and Continental Illinois, to name a few—took similar action, they merely remarked that they had made no recent loans to the public sector in South Africa and had no plans to do so in the near future. It all sounded like an orderly retreat from a dubious field of business. But banks don't usually discriminate against the wealthy under their own volition, and this was no exception. In fact, as *News for Investors*, an independent journal, noted, "The statements on lending practices being followed in South Africa came as a direct response to a series of shareholder resolutions being proposed to banks" in 1978 proxy statements.

What was surprising about this turn of events was not only that a cluster of major banks was abandoning a customer whose credit record was spotless, but that it was shareholder pressure forcing them to do so. Business *cognoscenti* generally view shareholder proposals as formalistic, ineffective gestures toward corporate democracy. As one investment broker put it recently, "Management sees these people at the annual meeting, they say 'Hello, Mrs. Davis,' or 'Hello, Mr. Gilbert.' [Evelyn Y. Davis and Lewis Gilbert, perennial shareholder proponents.] The officers let them talk, and then get on with their own business." Businessmen recognize that a well-placed telephone call—or informal hobnobbing among major investors—produces a great many more decisions than do public criticisms of a firm delivered at ceremonial annual meetings by a few outspoken opponents.

But the solitary retreats of private corporate power have lost some of their serenity of late, as they have been invaded by government agencies, public-interest groups, and, not least of all, increasingly sophisticated shareholder activists. The public can no longer be damned, though it can still be pushed around pretty handily. On not only the South African issue, but on matters as diverse as the Arab boycott, the selling of infant formula milk in the Third World, and the redlining of undesirable neighborhoods by banks and insurance companies, shareholder pressure—including resolutions—has forced or persuaded management to take another look. That corporations take this form of politics seriously, despite assertions to the contrary, is proved by their characteristic response to the resolutions: Every year they send out a battalion of lawyers in an attempt to convince the SEC that they should disqualify resolutions under a variety of clauses in the governing Securities and Exchange Act of 1934. And most of the time, the corporations lose.

But just as corporations themselves represent a strange sort of democracy, so the success of shareholder pressure represents the triumph of a wholly undemocratic sort of leverage. Proposals don't win or lose, they only lose by varying degrees of lopsidedness. A resolution that gains the support of 10 percent of the total shares approaches the pinnacle of success in this brand of politics; many achieve less than 3 percent. As Tim Smith, director of the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, a coordinating group for church investors, remarks, "A lot of business people would say that if one vote in 10 didn't back management directly ... that that

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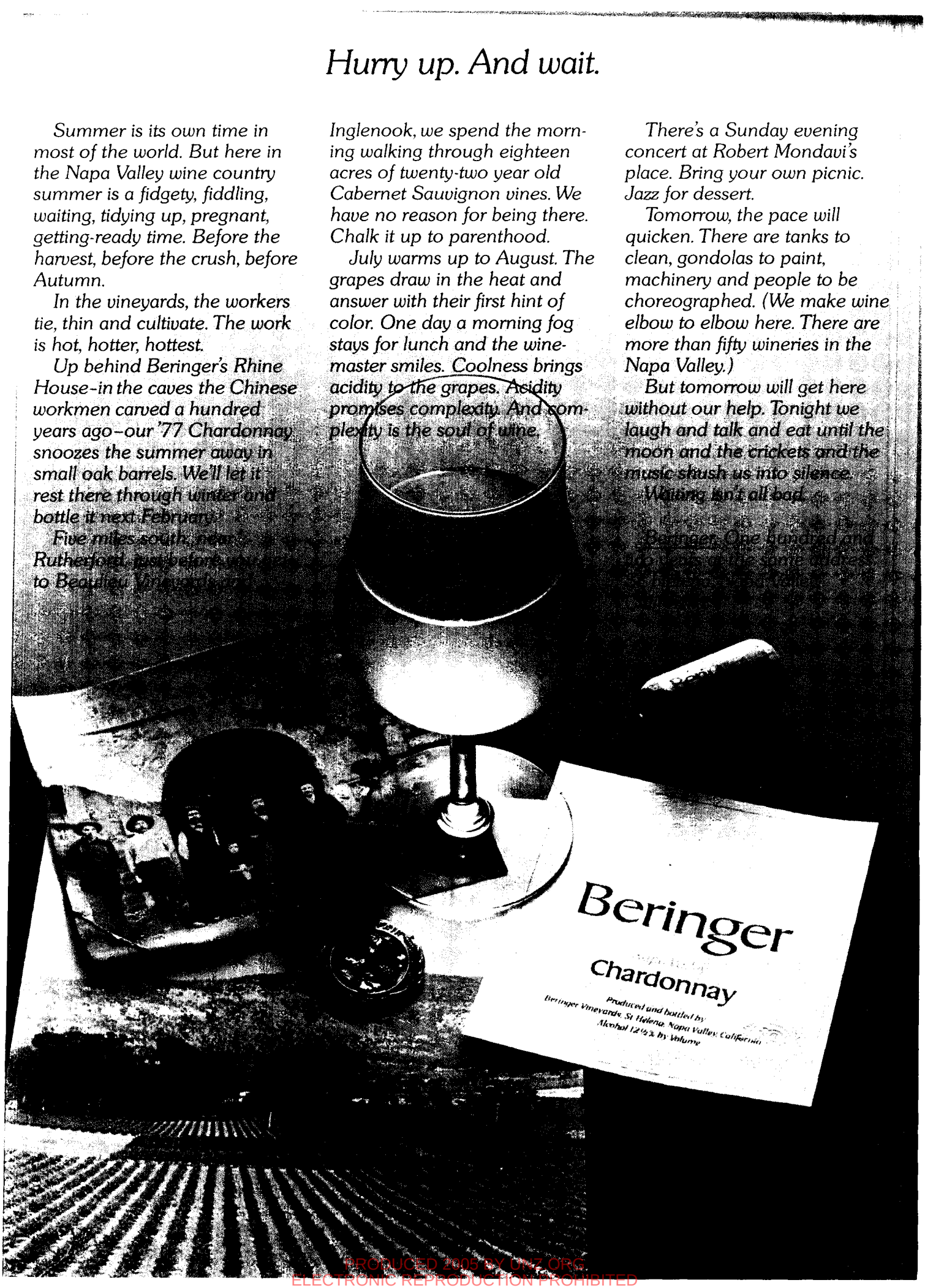
But tomorrow will get here without our help. Tonight we laugh and talk and eat until the moon and the crickets and the music shush us into silence.

Waiting isn't all bad.

Beringer. One hundred and [illegible]



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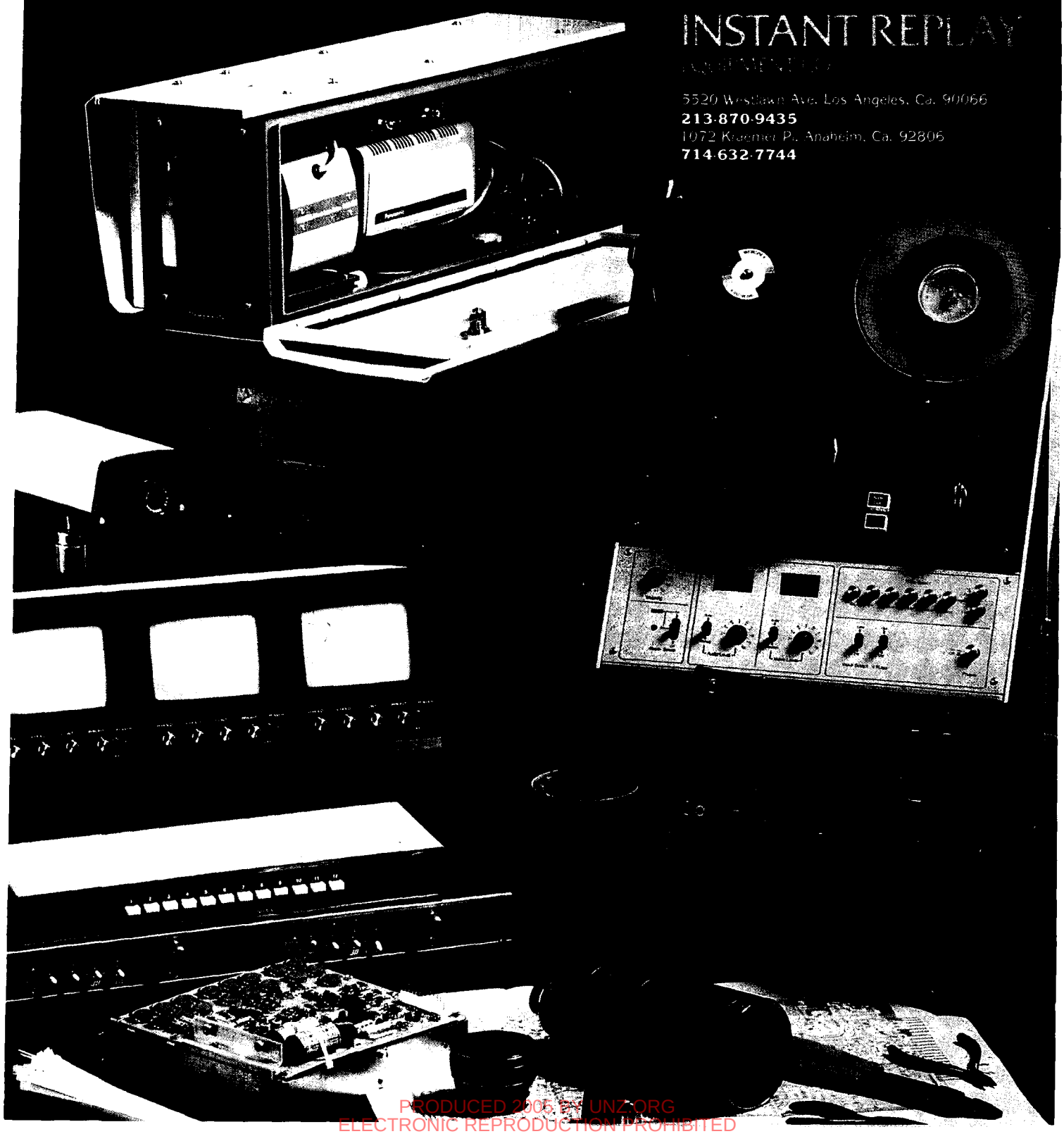

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would be looked at as a fairly minor but significant shareholder revolt."

The lion's share of votes, as Smith points out, is automatically captive to management. Banks (which control roughly 25 percent of stock-voting authority through their trust departments), mutual funds, insurance companies, investment companies, and brokerage houses almost never venture from management's corner. And management votes every unmarked proxy for itself.

SINCE SO FEW votes are even subject to persuasion, a 10 percent anti-management vote indicates substantial unrest. The army of the restless, which has been growing recently, consists primarily of nonprofit institutions. Church groups, whose combined equity holdings exceed $5 billion, remain the spear-carriers, formulating the bulk of the proposals and sustaining a running dialogue with reluctant executives. The last five years, however, have also seen the emergence of foundations, unions, universities, city and state governments, and even certain insurance firms as advocates, though not initiators, of shareholder resolutions.

As these eminently respectable institutions have come to the fore, the old line of quixotic renegades has lost most of its thunder. Perennial corporate gadfly Evelyn Y. Davis still entertains annual meetings by berating corporate chairmen on a first-name basis. During a recent ITT annual meeting, according to one spectator, Mrs. Davis informed "Hal"—former chairman Harold Geneen—that his efforts at recruiting women for the ITT board would be stifled by the women's jealousy of Mrs. Davis's close personal relationship with him. Geneen apparently found the argument uncompelling.

But liberal institutional investors do share one thing with Mrs. Davis: Since they control such a tiny portion of the shares of any given corporation, they succeed not by overwhelming, but by embarrassing. Thus many resolutions publicize topics which management doesn't want to hear about, and certainly doesn't want the public to know about. As if this weren't bad enough, the mere presence of a shareholder proposal on the proxy statement implies that management has something to hide, since the issue would otherwise have been resolved in previous negotiations. Thus the bank decisions mentioned at the beginning of this article preceded the vote on the proxy resolutions, and so had the effect of neutralizing them. Experienced share-

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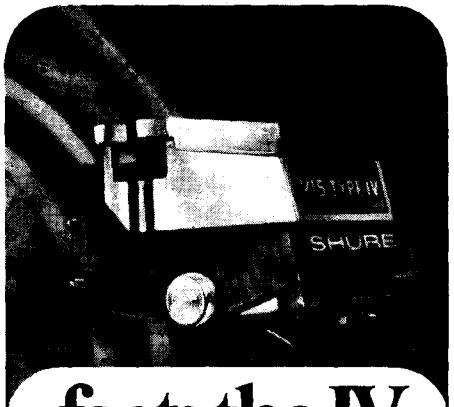

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Despite their rabid consumerism, Americans are patsies as shareholders. This may be a mark of despair rather than indifference.

holder lobbyists, like Dr. Howard Schomer, world issues secretary of the United Church of Christ, consider the proxy a last resort, though it hangs above private negotiations like a sword of Damocles, a promise of harassment and discomfort.

Though everybody's favorite examples of successful resolutions are those that pertain to investment or loans to South Africa, the publicity value of such resolutions makes them particularly well-suited to obscure issues. The controversy over infant formula milk, which has swirled its way into a Senate subcommittee, originated with shareholder proposals lodged by church groups against intransigent multinationals in 1975. Until that time, such milk-product companies as Bristol-Myers, Carnation, and Borden had peddled their infant formula to mothers in developing countries through employees who, dressed as nurses (most wore no company insignia), distributed free samples of the milk in maternity wards. Afterwards they sold them a regular supply of the company's product. Many of the mothers, besides being too poor to comfortably afford the formula, lived in rural areas where water was not always available for sterilization, and, being illiterate, were unable to follow the printed directions.

In 1975 Sisters of the Precious Blood, a Roman Catholic order active in South America, filed a resolution with Bristol-Myers asking it to disclose information regarding its milk-nurse program. The nuns re-submitted the resolution the following year, and filed suit against Bristol-Myers for including misleading information in its proxy statement rebuttal of charges contained in the proposal. Although the suit was eventually thrown out, Bristol-Myers not only disclosed the information in exchange for the church group's dropping its appeal, but, after waiting several months, announced that it had "reluctantly" decided to discontinue the milk-nurse program, owing to criticism. The company revealed its decision last May before Senator Kennedy's Subcommittee on Health and Human Resources, which had begun looking into the issue of infant formulas after the resolution and the suit unleashed a torrent of publicity.

The question most pertinent to shareholder resolutions is not so much why they are successful, but, rather, why they aren't more successful. Why do many corporations still look upon them as more of a nuisance than a threat? Why don't resolutions generate more noise, which is the source of their strength? Because, as smug executives like to point out, most people don't care. Resolutions remain the exclusive province of a few liberal institutions, though the number of those institutions is certainly growing. The average shareholder, especially when united with like-minded individuals, is capable of generating pressure far out of proportion to his minuscule holdings; but he seldom puts up his dukes against management. Despite their rabid consumerism, Americans are still patsies as shareholders.

MERRILL LYNCH recently estimated that of the proxy statements which it sent out to beneficial owners of stock, no more than 20 percent were returned marked. It seems that political activism stops someplace short of the pocketbook. As Jamie Heard, executive director of the Commerce Department's Task Force on Corporate Social Responsibility, remarks, "Most shareholders are interested in the rate of return, dividends, prices, and things of that sort," and are quite content to throw in their hats with management. Yet this nonchalance seems at odds with the distrust with which big corporations are now almost universally regarded.

If, as members of the public, Americans detest the corporate habit of bribing foreign officials, then, as shareholders, they should be expected to back, and back vociferously, resolutions calling on a company to disclose its questionable payments. That they do not do so is probably a mark of despair rather than indifference. Though a share represents a portion of ownership, a degree of authority, few shareholders actually think of it as conferring upon them some measure of power. Corporations, run by a small, self-selecting cabal of insiders, acknowledging their public status in an almost purely ritual fashion, seem far more impervious to public influence than do our political institutions.

As Mark Green, director of Congresswatch and a long-time Nader affiliate, observed, "A lot of people say, 'Shareholders don't care to participate. All they want is to be passive recipients of dividends.' Why would they want to participate when the system insures

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against them having any kind of influence? Our argument is not that every grandmother in tennis shoes is going to run for office, but the more you involve shareholders in a bona fide way, the more motivated they will be to participate."

But it may be too late for bona fide involvement. The heyday of the shareholder democracy movement has come and gone, briefly popularized by figures like Ralph Nader, though never quite catching the public imagination; now it occupies the status of buzzword. In any case, democracy is not necessary to make the shareholder proposal a more dangerous weapon. A few pointed changes in the Securities and Exchange Act would do just as well. And as would be expected, organized business takes a dim view of reform. When the SEC held public meetings last fall to hear proposals for change of regulation 14A of the act, which regulates proxy statements, the Business Roundtable, a clutch of presidents and chairmen widely viewed as the muscleman of business lobbies, sent emissaries to oppose the changes. Liberalizing the proxy system, declared the Roundtable, would "make a corporation a unit for debate about issues which should be decided through the political and legislative process." But the corporation already is such a unit, and the SEC, which has become a great fan of information disclosure since the corporate bribery scandals, has given the green light for broader debate.

Other reforms, however, may not fare so well. The SEC has heard suggestions to give proponents equal time in proxy statements and annual meetings; to compel firms to issue lists of beneficial stockholders to proponents for the purpose of canvassing; and, paramount, to alter the "Soviet-style" selection of directors by permitting shareholders to participate seriously in the process. However, most observers don't expect much from the basically conservative SEC. Dr. Schomer said flatly, "We have no reason to think that anything is going to change in the foreseeable future." Even taken together, the reforms would fall far short of shareholder democracy; but they would advance the resolution process several steps as a form of issue politics. And should those changes attract public-interest groups to the proxy statement once again, as Mark Green has said they might, then corporations might better be brought to account without recourse to legislative restraint.

And someday, if all goes well, shareholder proposals may even receive 20 percent of the vote. ◉

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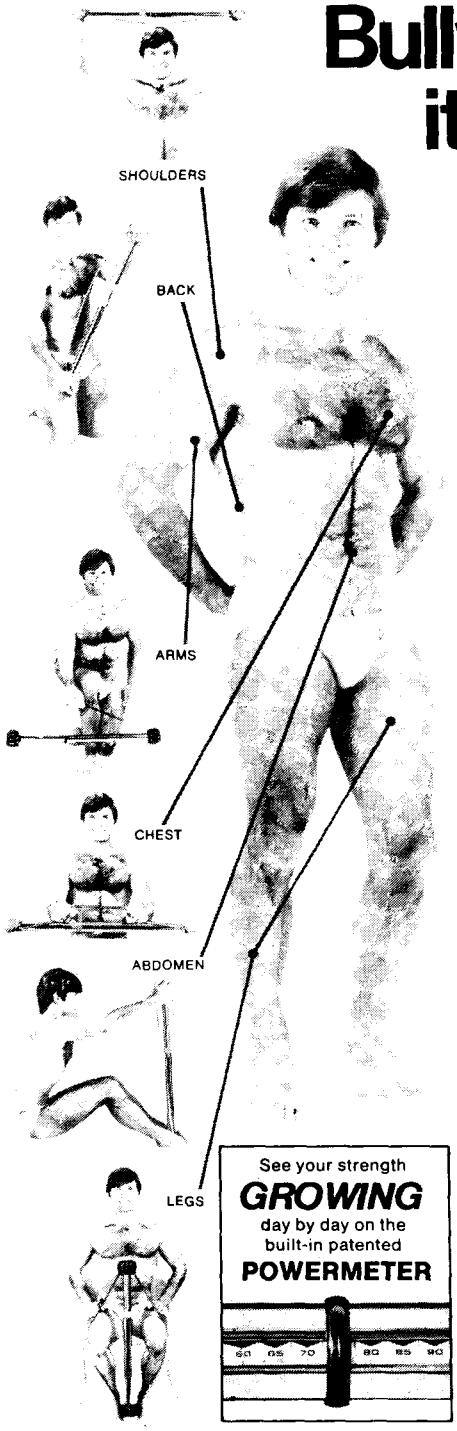

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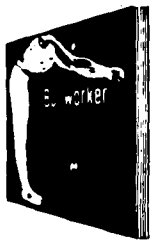

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ISSUES

IS CIVIL SERVICE STRANGLING THE GOVERNMENT?

by Peter J. Ognibene

TWO DECADES ago, when the American space program was literally unable to get off the ground, some wag suggested renaming the rocket the "Civil Servant." Why? "Because," went the punch line, "it doesn't work and it can't be fired."

Although the space program eventually succeeded, the civil-service system remains a joke. Nearly three million civilians are employed by the federal government, but the 21 thick volumes of regulations that specify how they may be recruited, managed, and fired are so needlessly complicated that the government is strangled with red tape.

The head of one federal agency, a Carter appointee who also served under Kennedy and Johnson, believes the "government personnel system" has become "a horn-honking, screaming traffic jam." The system cannot discriminate, he says, "between people who've done a great job and half a dozen distinguished losers." Without adequate rewards and disciplinary measures, bureaucrats become, in his view, obsessed with personal advancement: "How to stay on board, how to get the next promotion. You keep your head low and always say nice things to your colleagues."

Complaints like these have prompted a great many attempts at civil-service reform. The latest effort is a bill introduced by President Carter as "the centerpiece of government reorganization during my term in office." The bill, which passed through Congress after a protracted struggle, is intended to make the civil service more flexible and more responsive to merit and management. But even its proponents wonder if the bureaucracy can ever be untangled.

The civil service gets to write some of its own rules, but Congress deserves much of the blame for the intricate civil-service structure. People in the executive branch "have to share power with Congress," says William Medina, an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and a civil servant for 18 years before accepting his present political post. "Members of Congress have as much to do with running my agency as the managers do.... We have to go up to the Hill to negotiate with individual members of committees to get our regulations. The power of a particular committee and committee chairman is not to be taken lightly, and we don't do much that's important without checking with key members."

In Medina's view, many of the bureaucracy's shortcomings stem from the constitutional division of power among the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches. "The framers of the Constitution did not intend for the government of the

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A former civil servant admits that 'Individuals who come into goverment from the outside must feel they're in a mad scene from *Alice in Wonderland.'*

United States to maximize efficiency," he said. "They designed the system to curb the abuse of power. I figure that's the cost of doing business. But for the individuals who come into government from the outside, they must feel they're in a mad scene from *Alice in Wonderland*."

Few of the officials interviewed are as calm in the face of bureaucratic chaos as Medina. Indeed, Civil Service Commission chairman Alan K. Campbell believes a principal failing of the system is that "it is not designed to provide the kind of working environment in which people are judged ... (and) rewarded on the basis of their performance."

A waiter or salesperson who displeases customers might lose his job. Federal workers have no such fear because they are practically immune from disciplinary procedures. "Last year," said President Carter, "out of about two million employees, only 226 lost their jobs for inefficiency."

Firing a civil servant entails a massive investment of time and a flawless adherence to the regulations. Because it is easier to promote an employee and palm him off on another supervisor than it is to fire him, many individuals who are truly incompetent have a thick file of satisfactory performance ratings. So the supervisor who initiates an "adverse action" against an incompetent worker often has to face an implied, if not explicit, question: Why were other managers, but not you, able to handle this employee?

"There's a fear psychology among my managers about taking action against subordinates because of the appeal procedures," says Barbara Blum, the Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. "In effect, the managers are on trial. So they deal with sub-performers in other ways. They transfer them or shunt them off in a corner. The net effect is deadwood that we don't need, and the amount, although small, is growing."

From the manager's point of view, it's a deadly game of Catch-22. He knows he should fire an incompetent employee, but he also knows that the time and productivity required to document incompetence is worth far more than the individual's salary. Thus, a manager who actually tries to fire an incompetent risks being found incompetent himself. One manager who spent 18 months trying to fire a frequently (and illegally) absent typist "received a poor rating," noted a White House report, "due to the extensive amount of time he spent on this case." (See box, page 26.)

Conversely, it is almost impossible to repay meritorious service because the salaries of bureaucrats are rigidly fixed by law. All the outstanding manager is likely to get are tokens of esteem: signed photographs or letters of commendation from the head of the department or, perhaps, the President. At the Pentagon, said John P. White, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, "we give plaques—everybody's got plaques in his office—because we can't give money."

There are, then, no strong incentives for bold, innovative ideas. As a consequence, the people most attracted to the bureaucracy tend to be—or soon become—time-servers. So innovation, when it comes at all, must be imposed from the top; it does not bubble up from the ranks.

"I don't think I've seen a new idea since I've been here—not even a bad one," said one agency head. "Nobody in his right mind will have a new idea around here." After more than a year in office, this frustrated executive is still hoping to find a spark of originality in just one of his employees.

An even more disgusted victim of institutional inflexibility is Dr. Harry Cain, who resigned his $47,500-a-year post in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare earlier this year. "I can't take it anymore," he said. "I have totally lost my tolerance for the bureaucratic swamp through which a bureau like this must wade. The widest and deepest channel in the swamp, of course, is affectionately known as the personnel system."

With a budget of $150 million and loan authority of $3 billion, Cain's agency had been responsible for funding and staffing hospitals nationwide—a task it accomplished perhaps too well. Because many hospital beds were going unused, Cain's employees were given a new mission: to make existing medical facilities operate more efficiently. Cain tried for two years to reorganize his staff for their new task, but to little effect. His workers continued to see themselves as hospital-builders and could not respond collectively to changed circumstances. Cain's experience, alas, is altogether too common in Washington.

Other bureaucratic tangles occur over matters of "turf." The consequences of bureaucratic infighting are seldom dramatically evident, but jurisdictional squabbles can tie up the government for months or years and exacerbate domestic or international problems to the point of crisis.

It took the Carter administration, for instance, a year and a half to formulate an urban policy. Jerry Jasinowski, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Policy, recalled the effects of inter-agency combat. "Every time one person took a position," he said, "six agencies would have to review it. There's a whole set of turf issues which are encouraged by civil servants. In general, my staff will recommend actions that are more sensitive to my turf than I would take." Yet, he added, "it may be an issue I can resolve in an afternoon with a top person" in a rival agency.

Inertia, indifference to merit, jurisdictional squabbles—the failings of bureaucracy seem immune to legislative cure. President Carter, however, hopes to reform civil service. Under authority previously granted by Congress, Carter will abolish the 95-year-old Civil Service Commission on January 1, 1979, and divide its responsibilities between a Merit Systems Protection Board and an Office of Personnel Manage-

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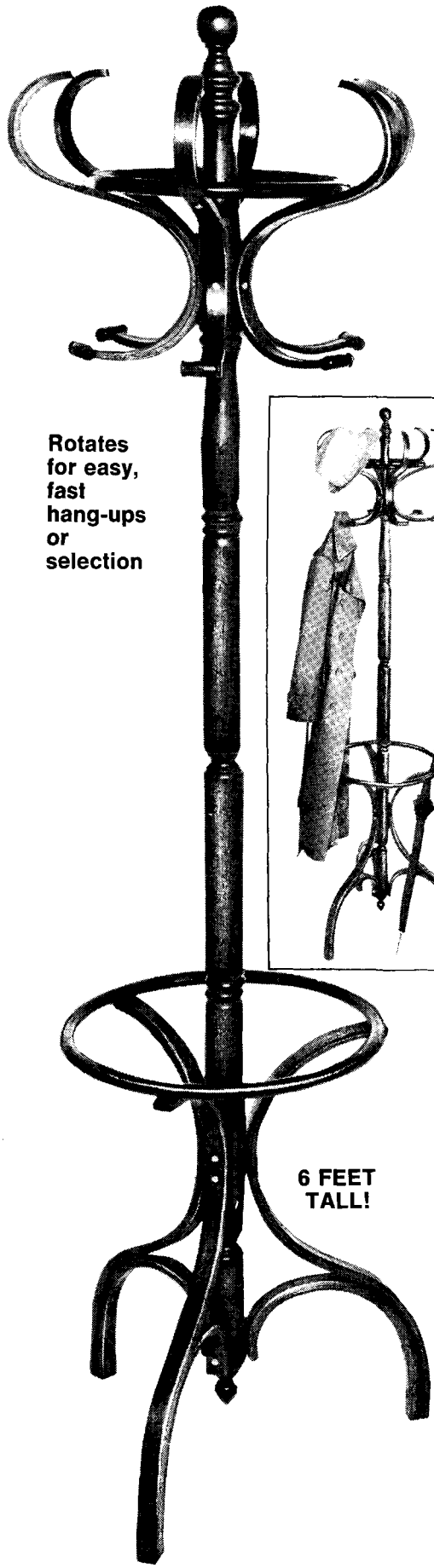

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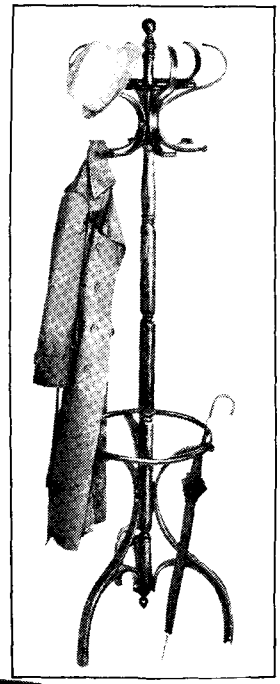

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Federal employees' unions have been the strongest opponents of reform. 'It's undermining my property right in my job,' said one employee.

ment. The latter will establish policies for testing, recruiting, and training government workers. The administration hopes it will do for federal employment what the Office of Management and Budget does for the budget-making process—ride herd on the departments and agencies to see that proper procedures are established.

The Merit Systems Protection Board, a bipartisan body, will look into allegations of political abuse or unfair employment practices. It will consider all individual grievances.

It makes good sense to separate the policy-making and adjudicatory functions of the Civil Service Commission into two separate agencies. But merely changing the nameplates will not make the system operate more efficiently; Congress has had to cooperate with the President by amending the laws which govern civil service.

President Carter's legislative program to reform civil service originally included three key proposals. First, the top 9,200 civil servants would be organized into a Senior Executive Service; up to 10 percent of its members could be political appointees. The present system is so rigid that 85 percent of the government's senior managers remain in the same agency throughout their careers. By freeing the highest-ranking civil servants from any departmental affiliation, the White House will be able to put its senior executives where they are most needed.

A merit-pay system would be established for the 72,000 civil servants in the three grades (GS 13 - 15) just below the Senior Executive Service. Although present "step increases" are theoretically linked to merit, they have become virtually automatic: to deny one is considered an "adverse action," which could set in motion a lengthy appeal. The merit system would pay cash bonuses only to the best managers.

The third key proposal sought to drastically reduce the preferences accorded military veterans over other federal job-seekers. Because relatively few women and minority members are veterans, these preferences have severely limited their opportunities to enter and advance in the ranks of civil service. All veterans—combat soldiers and Pentagon clerks alike—now get five points added to their test scores and cannot be passed over for a job when they are among the top three competing for a particular post. Carter would like to limit their preference to 10 years following their discharge and end it altogether for retired field-grade officers. (The 10-point preference for disabled veterans would remain.)

Although the legislation managed to get through Congress surprisingly intact, the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars played a tough inside game on Capitol Hill to kill the proposed changes in veterans' preference. They first succeeded on the Senate side, where the bill passed with no such changes. The legislation reported by the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee would have limited veterans to one use of the preference within 15 years of their discharge from the military. But the full House refused to go along with even this moderate reform, and there it died.

The most virulent opponents of civil-service reform have been the federal employees' unions. They opposed the formation of the Senior Executive Service ostensibly because 10 percent of its members could be political appointees. Campbell called that "a phony argument." The unions' real concern, in his view, is that the SES would create "some uncertainty" for a miniscule portion of the federal work force (about three-tenths of one percent): "One employee testified, 'It's undermining my property right in my job.' "Which," said Campbell, "is a fairly interesting choice of words about how some people feel about their jobs in the government."

For a while this past summer, union allies in the House saddled Carter's bill with pro-labor amendments that they knew imperiled the measure's chances of winning the Republican support needed for passage. The administration lobbied effectively behind the scenes, however, and managed to strip the amendments from the bill in exchange for some minor concessions to the unions and their powerful supporters in the House.

Although the President got most of what he asked for, the impact of his legislative proposals, while salutary, may be less than sweeping. Campbell estimates that perhaps 10 percent of the personnel problem can be remedied by legislation; fully 90 percent hinges on how well the rules are applied by those within the system.

And therein lies the crux of the matter—that vessel of obduracy known as the bureaucratic mind. "I sometimes have the sense that I'm trying to repeal the iron laws of bureaucracy with mere legislation," said Campbell with a laugh. But, as he well knows, it's no laughing matter. ◉

Ready, Aim, Fire...If You Can

A civil servant who has been duly informed of his incompetence should, in theory, be pounding the pavement 30 days later. In practice, however, a "dismissal" can drag out for months or even years.

Take the case of the GS-4 typist cited in the article. In January of 1975, her supervisor began documenting her unauthorized absences in memos to the deputy director of the agency. In February, he warned her that an "adverse action" against her would result if the problem were not cleared up within 60 days. Two months later, she was told her "step increase" (pay raise) would be denied.

In June of that year, the typist was given a memo by her supervisor which enumerated her unauthorized absences since 1966; this led to a three-day suspension in September. The pattern of abuse continued into May of 1976, at which time she was given her "final warning." The following month the personnel department gave her the option of resigning or being dismissed. In July, she chose to resign for reasons of health.

It took 18 months to remove this particular employee, but it could easily have taken longer. She could have appealed, in sequence, to the Federal Employee Appeals Authority, an arbitration board and the Civil Service Commissioners. Had they proved unyielding, she could have gone to the federal district court. Because the administrative proceedings of the civil service system have no weight in court, the case would have begun anew.

So much time and manpower are wasted just getting rid of low-level employees that managers either work around them or try to promote them into someone else's department. Indeed, a manager would have to be incompetent to attempt to fire an incompetent "worker."

Peter Ognibene is a Washington-based freelance writer, who reports on military and political issues.

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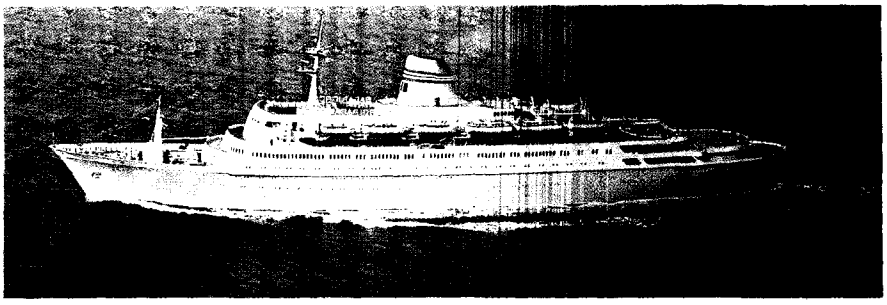

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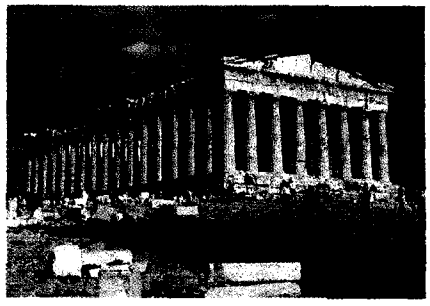

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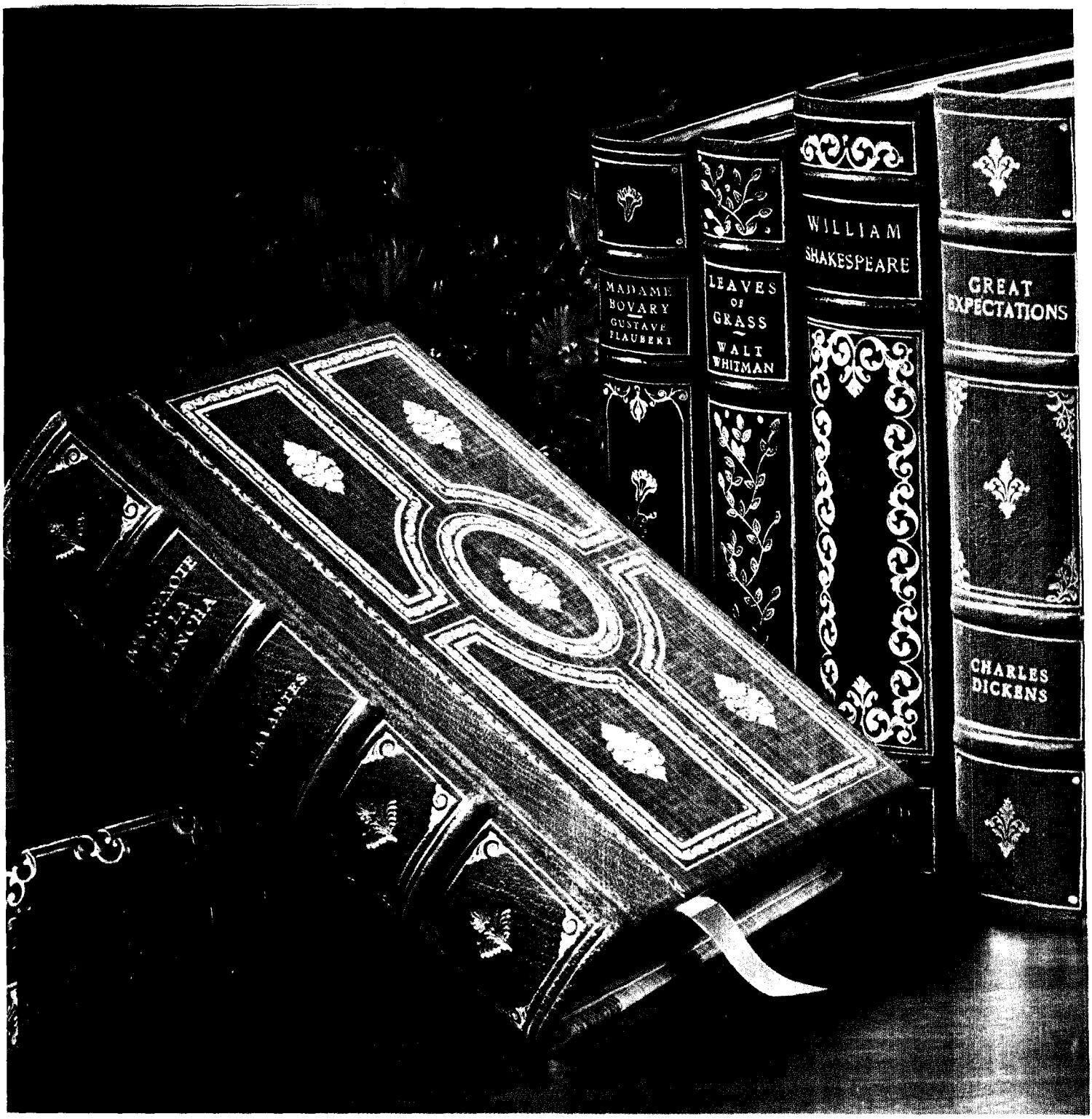

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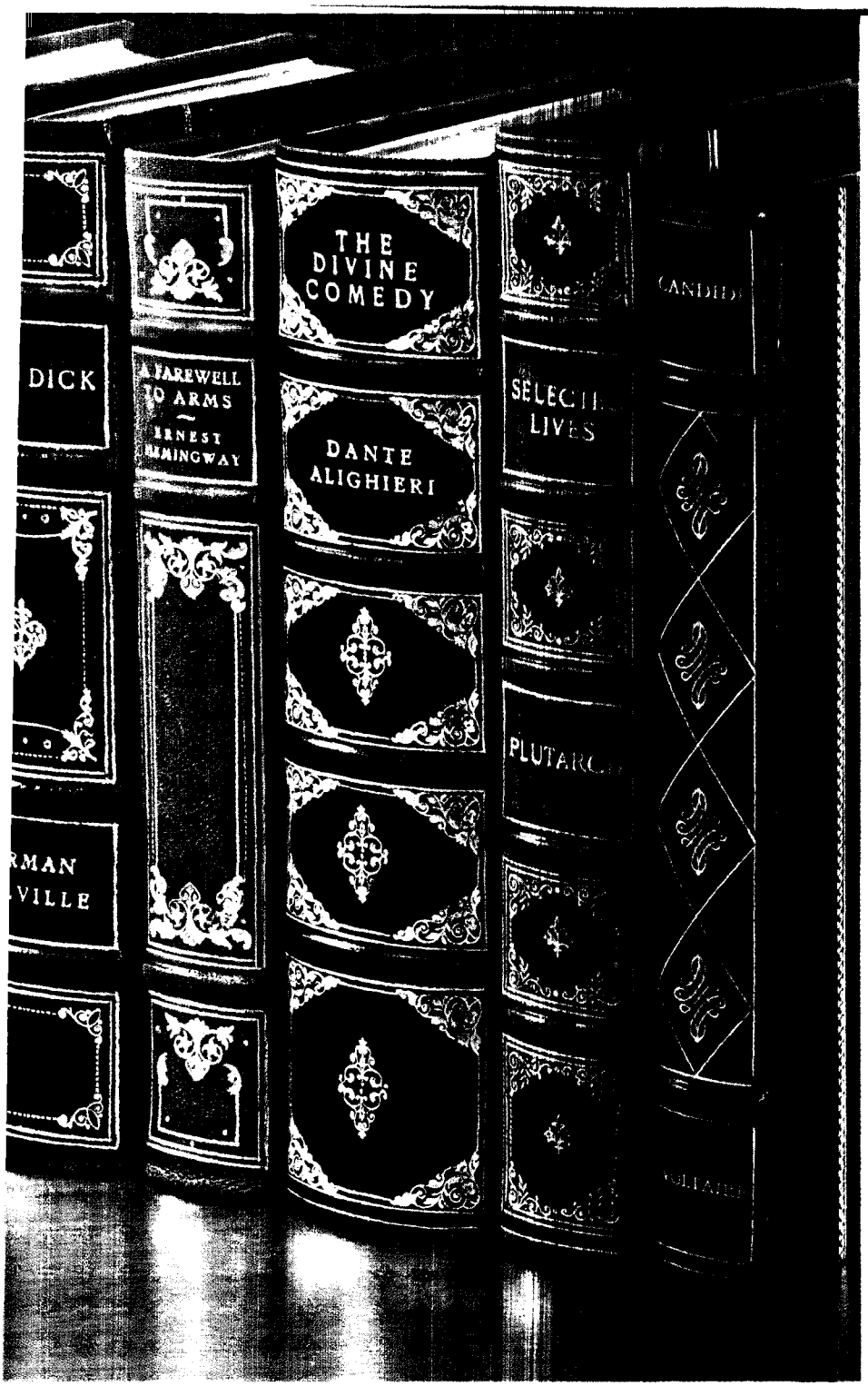

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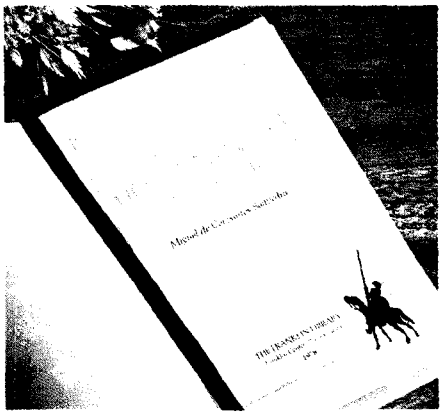

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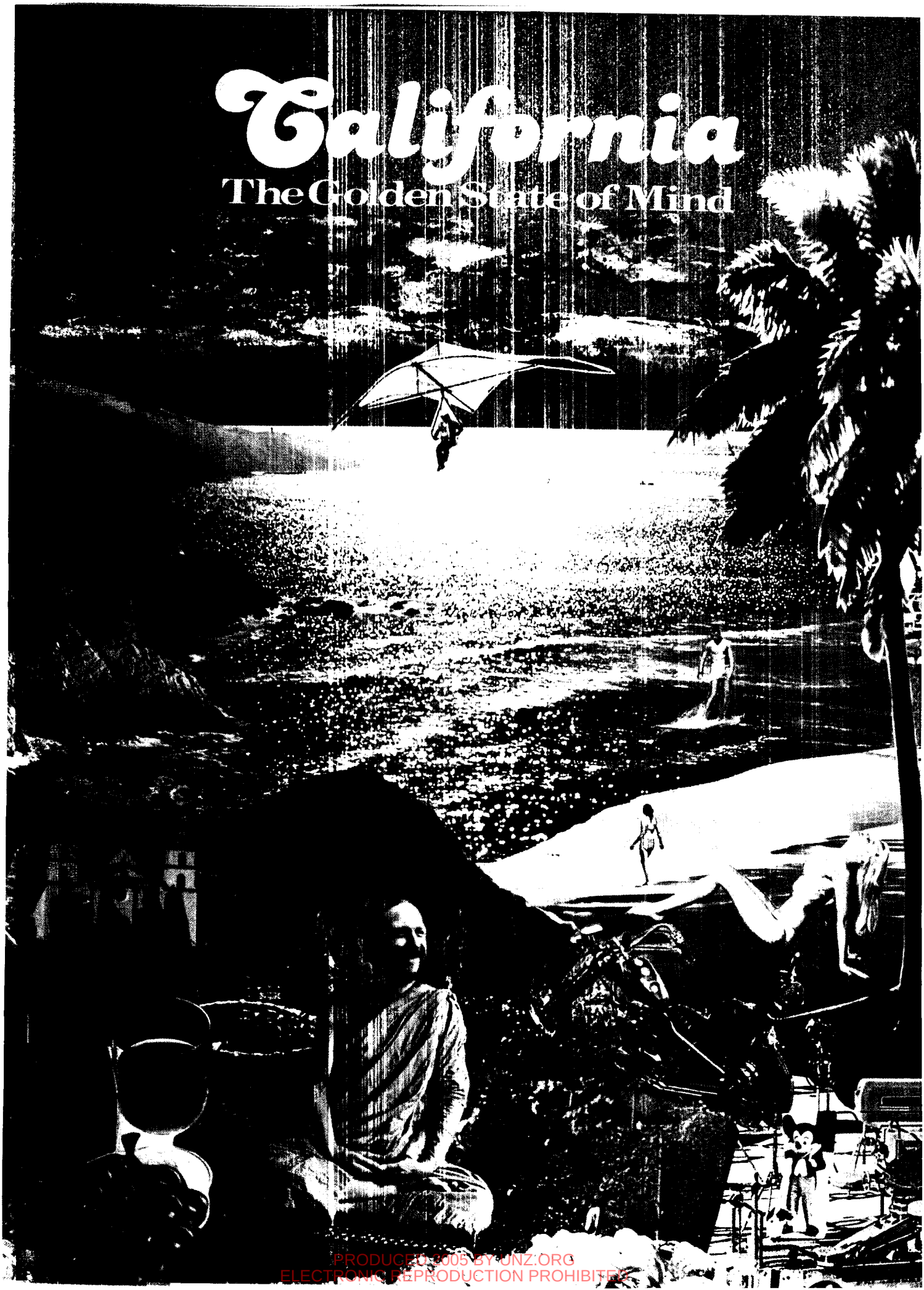

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Anticipating America

by Roger M. Williams

NUDE GROUPING in a hot tub has become a quintessentially California pastime, and we four—a Marin County couple I knew clothed, a Marin single woman I'd not met in any condition, and I—climbed into the outdoor container with an unselfconscious nonchalance my Eastern breeding could barely comprehend. We wriggled and crossed legs and passed around a bottle of red wine (California, of course); and when the skin felt prickly we cooled ourselves by perching, private belongings casually exposed, on the tub's edge, talking, as informed Californians tend to, about the state of the state: its distinctive politics and the ways in which they anticipate the shape of America-to-come.

About one million of California's residents, a social scientist has estimated, are dropouts—laid back, mellowing out, into their own space, and, if they're lucky, "together." That is the most popular perception of the most populous state, and to an extent it is accurate. But there remains another California that overlaps and ultimately overshadows the place America loves

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to imitate, to deride, and to envy. One might call it California the future, the frontier, not frontier in the old Western sense but in the new, national sense of innovativeness and openness in addressing contemporary problems. If that is less romantic than the California legend—of perpetual growth and natural riches, of tawny women and bronzed men—it is obviously more important. Increasing numbers of Californians realize that the state's matchless natural assets—"the things that brought me out here," as a Sacramento resident describes them—are in jeopardy. It is this sense of paradise possibly lost, as well as a pervasive feeling of community, that makes California the nation's most aggressive attacker of major social problems.

Just how aggressive was made abundantly clear last June, when California voters passed the now-famous Proposition 13, a state constitutional amendment that drastically reduces property taxes and thereby eliminates some $7 billion in funds available to local governments. Shock waves from Prop 13 continue to be felt around the nation, with officeholders and whole legislatures scrambling to present an image as tax cutters and slashers of public spending. Inevitably, Prop 13 has had "internal" effects as well—California innovativeness in conflict with itself. Thirteen's cutbacks and cutback-inspired thinking helped motivate the legislature to set aside or scrap a number of progressive proposals, among them bills to rationalize the state's patchwork water system and protect development-endangered agricultural lands.

Californians realize that the state's matchless assets are in jeopardy.

The furor over 13 almost drowned out the debate over another California ballot proposition, this one on a vastly different subject—the rights of homosexuals. Prop 6, which goes before the voters this month, would force public-school officials to bar gay teachers from the classroom. Oklahoma recently passed a similar law, but events in the Sooner State simply do not hit with the impact of California. There, large and expensive campaigns have been mounted on both sides of the emotional gay-teacher issue, and the result is very much in doubt. (A sign in an anti-6 parade illustrated both the sad humor and complexity of the issue: "If I'm bisexual can I teach part-time?")

I lived briefly in California in the early Sixties and again in the mid-Seventies. But on a recent trip there, talking to people about the state's present and future, I was impressed more than ever by California's distinctive qualities: the almost universal self-perception of being fortunate, even blessed, and the pervasive interest in public affairs that creates legions of citizens who know their legislators and commissions and agencies and who care about what they all do.

California's rise from an odd, exotic locale to the nation's most populous and intriguing state was an important phenomenon of the Fifties and Sixties. Accompanied by a great deal of publicity and chest-thumping, it enhanced California's already palpable confidence and sense of singularity. The early Seventies brought a dramatic slowing of the growth rate: Population in 1971 grew only one-quarter as fast as in 1960. In addition, the Seventies brought serious economic problems and open conflict between those who advocate continued growth and those who want growth—and its support system, like nuclear power and unfettered land development—sharply restricted. This same conflict remains central to California life. How the state resolves the conflict will affect far more than its own future. It will also condition how the rest of us deal with similar issues in decades to come.

California already has an unparalleled record in dealing with them. A few states—Oregon, Washington, Florida—have acted sooner on this or that aspect of growth and environmental preservation, but California has been among the pacesetters consistently and across the board; it has achieved that position in the face of population and other pressures that far outstrip those of the other progressive states. The San Francisco Bay area has done much of the pioneering.

The state entered the field with a rush in 1970. That year the legislature enacted a sweeping Environmental Quality Act. Two years later, frustrated by the lawmakers' failure to protect the state's 1,000 miles of magnificent and chronically endangered coastline, the voters approved an initiative that set up the strongest coastal commission the nation has yet seen. In 1974, the legislature created the first state commission on energy matters. In 1976, perhaps anticipating the failure of an initiative that would have foreclosed the use of nuclear power (see *SR*, January 22, 1977), it enacted a package of nuclear "safeguard" laws that were and still are unique. Along the way, the state also has brought into being a strongly conservationist forestry act and a massive program of public-park acquisitions.

"About all we haven't gotten," says John Zierold, the Sierra Club lobbyist in Sacramento, "is a 'bottle bill' [banning no-deposit drink containers] and a statute that will preserve our

Collages by Dennis Pohl

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prime agricultural lands."

As Zierold readily admits, however, the gains made are not secure. Attempts are constantly made to weaken the impact of the Environmental Quality Act and related legislation. An assembly committee recently turned away a powerful effort by state utilities to exempt from the nuclear safeguard provisions a huge nuclear plant proposed for the Mojave Desert. Called Sundesert, the plant has been the dream of San Diego Gas & Electric, which did not want to delay construction until someone discovered a waste disposal method satisfactory to the California Energy Commission.

In California nowadays, hardly a week passes without a court decision, legislative action, gubernatorial proclamation, or kickoff of an initiative campaign relating directly to energy or water or land use or some other issue that bears heavily on the state's future. Much of the toughest work is being done by regulatory agencies that have been given broad powers over such controversial matters as coastal land use and development of energy resources. One of the principal achievements of 40-year-old Jerry Brown, the sometimes flaky but sometimes boldly farsighted governor, has been to appoint notably intelligent, public-spirited people to these agencies.

California is alive with public-interest groups—almost 600 dealing with the environment alone—and with partisans who are almost as knowledgeable as they are outspoken. The bedrock issue they are all debating is how the land should be used and altered and for whose benefit. To an observer accustomed to old-style, big-city politics, the debate seems surprisingly principled and well-mannered, the maneuvering that accompanies it squeakily clean. This is largely a product, Californians say, of the accessibility of the political system.

Houston Flournoy, the Republican who almost defeated Jerry Brown in the 1974 governor's race, cites himself as evidence of the accessibility: "I came to California in 1957, and I was elected to the legislature in 1960. When I worked for the New Jersey legislature, years ago, a few guys in Trenton controlled what happened in the state. Here, nobody controls the system, so anybody can get into it."

The state's continuing growth seems only to reinforce its openness. The results, one can argue, are not all good: Former movie actors at one time filled both the governorship and a U.S. Senate seat, and an archconservative retired police chief ran second in a strong Republican gubernatorial field this year. But while Californians retain their taste for the shallow and the bizarre, they have also demonstrated an unsurpassed capacity for facing head-on the larger problems that confront them. They will need all this capacity and perhaps more, for California's growth has again quickened.

Frank McCulloch, managing editor of the Sacramento *Bee*, thinks the increased rate reflects "a resurgence of the California dream. Two years ago, California was the last disillusionment. Now the job applications, the phone calls from acquaintances back east, the casual references to how good life is here all have picked up. The mystique has reasserted itself. There was always a promotion attached to this state's growth: the Chandlers in Los Angeles, the Southern Pacific railroad, the automobile clubs, the defense contracts and research money. But now growth just seems to be happening."

To show for its growth, California has some of the world's most alarming examples of urban sprawl: For a while it seemed as though all of Santa Clara County (San Jose) would be paved over. But nobody pushes all-out growth any more. Most people are worried that whatever growth does occur will bring unwanted consequences to some cherished portion of the California Dream. The following is a rundown on growth and its most troublesome offspring and on what Californians are doing about them:

Population. California's population currently stands around 22 million, and economists predict that it will exceed 26 million by 1990. Sheer numbers of people are not expected to be a great burden on the state, which, after all, encompasses 158,693 square miles. But where the people cluster they have already become a great burden. Ninety-four percent of the state's population lives on 2½ percent of its land—along the Pacific shore. "Sure, that frightens me," says Sim Van der Ryn, a Berkeley professor who has become one of Jerry Brown's close advisors on growth-connected questions. "I'm intrigued by the possibility of building new cities, based on renewable energy sources and California values." Unlike some fellow-advocates of limited growth, Van der Ryn would not want to shut the utility companies out of this process: "We need to bring in mainstream business, both for their know-how and because otherwise we'd be dismissed as kooks."

The Economy. The Brown administration has often been characterized as antibusiness. Two events gave credibility to the charge. One was the publication of a report by the Fantus consulting firm which ranked California 47 among the 48 mainland states according to business "climate." The other was the withdrawal by Dow Chemical, after much state-agency-caused delay, of an application to build a $500 million petrochemical plant. The Fantus report can be discredited—it is based on data gathered during Ronald Reagan's second term as governor—and there were good reasons for denying Dow the necessary permits. But the antibusiness image persists, nourished by the success of environmental campaigns and by Brown's own "small is beautiful" utterances.

Brown has been making strong at-

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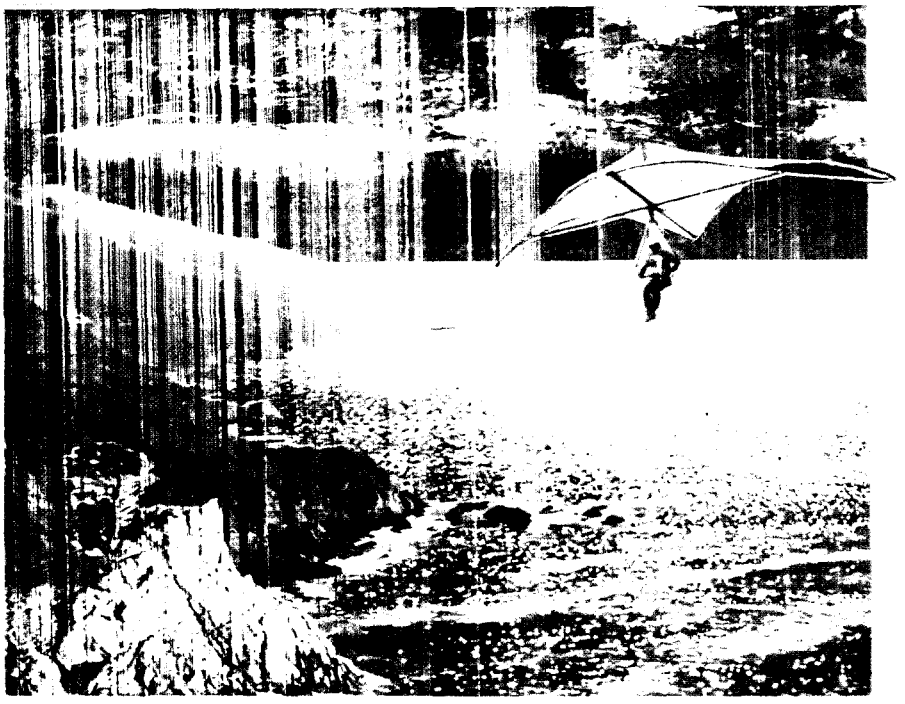
tempts to erase that image, not only for the state's sake but also for his own: The no new industry/no new jobs issue has been lurking in the background of Brown's race this fall against Republican Evelle Younger. Meanwhile, the overall economy remains strong. California accounts for 12 percent of the gross national product, more than any other single state, and no significant change in that standing is forecast.

Land Use. California has 100 million acres of land, and, judging by the steady furor over land-use issues, its residents feel a paternal interest in every acre. The Coastal Commission has placed a general, though somewhat uneven, damper on development along the water's edge. It has required local authorities to formulate coastal programs that permit only "necessary and proper development." The first programs are trickling in; while some are obviously inadequate, others, from such environmentally sensitive areas as Santa Barbara, reflect a tougher line even than the commission's. Localities threatened by unwanted growth are basing their defenses on the victory won by the town of Petaluma, north of San Francisco, which battled all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court to gain the right to keep out newcomers.

Less settled are the serious questions of urban sprawl and decay and protection of prime agricultural lands. Governor Brown's ballyhooed "urban strategy," one of the nation's first statewide land-use programs for cities, is antigrowth in the sense that it calls for "directing new development to existing cities and suburbs"; California, the state strategists declare, "must commit itself to more compact urban areas." It also must "renew and maintain existing urban areas" and discourage "noncontiguous development"—that is, sprawl. Southern California is openly the main target of the strategy, and conversations with officials there indicate that the sprawling south is ready to cooperate in kicking its habit.

Forty percent of the 45 proposals that make up the urban strategy require legislative action, but Brown's lieutenants are optimistic about their enactment. A key to making the overall strategy work, says Bill Press, director of Planning and Research, is to coax developers to change their laissez-faire habits. "Developers have always followed the paths of least resistance, and the paths have been paved with state and federal assistance," Press says. "Now we'll assist them to do the kind of developing *we* want done."

Next year the legislature will wrestle with competing agricultural land bills.



Most large-scale development, especially in the wildly growing areas, has come at the expense of "ag" lands. In the Sixties, 50- to 60,000 acres of it a year were being "converted"; the rate has been cut roughly in half, but, as Press points out, the best ag acreage is usually the most sought after by the developer. "We simply can no longer have urban areas growing at the expense of agriculture," he says. "It's the most valuable resource we have." The environmentally minded aim to identify prime ag land and limit development of it for other purposes. They also hope to change the policy of taxing the land at "highest and best use"; that inevitably means development and pushes along the whole farm-to-subdivision transformation.

California accounts for 12 percent of the GNP, more than any other state.

Energy. California's battle lines are most clearly drawn over energy, which has tended to be the most emotional of contemporary issues. (For one thing, jobs are—or are perceived to be—at stake.) Conservatives and large numbers of moderates predict a standstill state if the present virtual moratorium on nuclear facility construction is not eased. They are aghast at the sight—in the nation's most economically productive state—of the governor and Speaker of the Assembly (San Francisco Democrat Leo McCarthy) both articulating antinuclear positions. But the opponents of nuclear power, heartened by the defeat of the Sundesert project, show no signs of weakening. They are joined by what must be the nation's most formidable array of proponents of alternative energy sources.

Sim Van der Ryn notes with satisfaction that, while the federal government sticks stubbornly to nuclear energy research, California has invested the great bulk of its sizable energy expenditures into the most promising alternatives—wind, sun, and geothermal sources. Before Proposition 13 forced cutbacks, the proposed 1978-79 state budget contained some 30 line items for alternative-source research. Still in business is the delightfully named Office of Appropriate Technology, which tries to devise modest, relatively inexpensive projects that will help Californians help themselves by means of environmental innovations. For instance, the office has been providing technical assistance on such matters as community gardens, solar installations, and what Van der Ryn calls "urban self-reliance."

The alternative-energy advocates benefit from the state's munificent natural environment, which offers the sunshine, wind and water power, and even fuel-adaptable waste materials needed to make any alternative systems at all feasible. "These systems will not produce cheap power," says John Holdren, a Berkeley-based international energy specialist who has recently turned his attention to California, "but neither will anything else in the long term." A number of residential developments in the state, Holdren says, now incorporate solar water and room-area heating: "If we were willing to undertake a crash program now, California by 2025 could have mostly solar heating—compared with the standard nationwide projection of 10 percent solar by 2000.

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Whether it's solar or not, the emphasis must be on *renewable* sources." A large-scale switch to "renewables," Holdren agrees, will bring internal conflicts in the ranks of environmentalists and conservationists: "There might be places—along the northern coast and the crests of the Sierra—where you'd want to put forests of windmills to feed a big power grid. Conservation could minimize the impact of such technology, but only up to a point. Then real choices will have to be made."

Meanwhile, a real choice was made last summer on the controversial issue of importing liquefied natural gas (LNG), and the choice does not please either environmentalists or limited-growthers. The state public utilities commission approved Point Conception, above Santa Barbara, as the site for a huge new terminal for LNG from Alaska and Indonesia. Because LNG is highly explosive, Point Conception is a much-esteemed unspoiled area, and lots of gas could mean lots of growth, the terminal proposal provoked bitter opposition.

Water. The drought of 1976–77 probably did more than any other modern occurrence to convince the average Californian that the state is not an endless cornucopia of natural resources. In the areas hardest hit, voluntary and mandatory reductions of up to 20 and 40 percent, respectively, were made without a public backlash. Some counties, including Marin, took advantage of the drought by using it as an excuse to impose even tougher restrictions on land development. Rainfall since the drought has been abnormally heavy, and scarcity seems far away. But the state's water specialists are pushing for a comprehensive approach to the problem that would, among other things, lessen the long-standing animosity over water between the northern and southern sections of the state. Almost all of the state's internally generated water supply comes from the north, a situation that has led a long line of northern legislators to propose water bills that would either cut off the south or force its residents to pay sharply increased rates. Southern California's legendary swimming pools, however, are an insignificant part of the consumption problem: 85 percent of the state's water goes to agriculture.

Typical of California, the water debate concerns not just a consumable commodity but a substance coveted for many different reasons. Speaking of the "delta," a vast water-holding area south of Sacramento, a state official notes: "All kinds of conflicting interests come into play there. The locals want the quality kept high for their use. Environmentalists don't care so much about quality as about preservation of marshes and estuaries. Sportsmen want good fishing. Water specialists want rational systems. The politicians want to get re-elected. Then there are the water-skiers, the swimmers, the resort owners, and on and on."

Many other problems confront California, of course, and a good number of them are environmentally related. Not everyone I talked to was optimistic that they will be satisfactorily resolved. John Holdren, the energy expert, a 34-year-old California native with an intense but friendly manner, tilted his chair back at the end of our interview and said, "Look, there are a lot of things I see happening here that I don't like at all: the deterioration of the physical environment; the degree to which major areas of the coast have already been lost to public use; the development of prime agricultural land—still going on after 30 years; the pressures of population growth that seem to require us to permit, say, Los Angeles to have another five million people. We're up against an environmental overload—physical and social—and, if I had to bet, I'd say things will go quite a bit further downhill before the public grasps what's happening to their state."

In fact, all of the specific problems Holdren mentioned are being dealt with in at least as intelligent and forthright a manner as they're being dealt with anywhere else in the United States. He in effect acknowledged that when he added to his gloomy rundown, "The thing is, California has a shot at seizing solutions to these problems. It has good people on the important commissions, and it has a way of dealing with the big issues in the main political arena. I guess that's what keeps people like me from going out and getting drunk."

When I got back to New York City, Gimbels, one of the major department stores, was having a large, splashy promotion called "Picture Yourself in California." Prominently featured was an item bearing the cutesy name of "luv tub." I called to inquire and was told that the tub was redwood, "suitable for socializing, meditating, and entertaining," and available with optional equipment. But there was one very discordant note: The device was being promoted as a bathroom appliance! No nude strolls along the patio nor quick slips up into the cooling night air. No pondering the deeper implications of hot-tub life. These Easterners, I thought impulsively, they'll never get California straight. ◉

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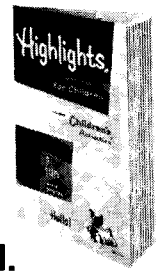

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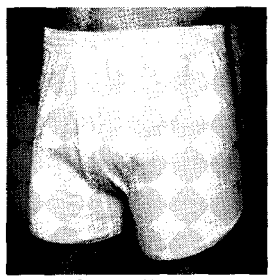

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Gauls, Grapes, and Gourmandry

by Horace Sutton

THE GAULS have a distressing habit of erecting culinary chapels along obscure country crossroads with which few except the locals are familiar and which few among the *auslanders* can ever find. I think of the Auberge du Père Bise in Talloires, which has a population of 709 and is located 536 kilometers from Paris and 33 kilometers from Albertville, wherever that is. Or that of the talented Haeberlin brothers who have plunked their Auberge de l'Ill in the metropolis of Illhaeusern, which has a population of 517 and is located on the eastern edges of France, 15 kilometers from Artzenheim, and 13 from Sélestat. Everybody got that?

I suspect, perhaps unkindly, that some of this I'm-going-to-be-nifty-come-and-find-me philosophy passed through the minds of the Moët & Chandon champagne people, normally based in Epernay in France, when they decided to grow grapes in California, open a winery, and build a French restaurant in the high style of pluperfect Gallic culinary finesse. They chose a site on raw land in the Napa Valley of northern California, 60 miles from San Francisco, 9 miles from Napa in the town called, uneuphonically enough, Yountville. Its population is 4,000.

Peter Aaron

John Zimmerman

Moët's restaurant at Yountville—"Threading through the minefields of prices."

There they bought 1,500 acres, about half of them plantable—or enough to produce 100,000 cases of sparkling wine a year—and three years ago this coming December set about building a winery. It opened a year ago last April, a spare but stunning set of buildings, designed by ROMA, California architects, to settle—with its Napa stone and unfinished concrete, its brick walls and long, semicylindrical poured-concrete rooftops—without too much ado into the sere Napa countryside.

The restaurant, like the vineyard itself, is called Domaine Chandon, and has been planted there to provide a cuisine that would be fitting for the wines Moët intends to produce. The Moët people claim oenophilic lineage to Dom Pérignon, the inventor of champagne, whose memory is enshrined at the Abbey de Haut Villers on their property near the Marne. They also recall with some affiliative sentimentality that Moët champagne was produced for the first time in 1743, the very same year that Peter and Jane Randolph Jefferson produced Thomas. Moët's first consignment of 100 bottles to the newly independent nation, which Jefferson helped to launch, departed from Champagne in 1787, the year the Constitution was signed. And even when the Revolution was sweeping France in 1792, Jean-Rémy Moët, with heads rolling all about him, managed to get off a second shipment of some 216 bottles destined for friends in Philadelphia.

Agoston Haraszthy, a name as well known in California wine circles as that of Jerry Brown in transpacific statesmanship, dispatched his son Arpad from Paris to California in 1861, and bid him use in the California vineyards the expertise he had learned in the Moët caves. Arpad produced Eclipse, a California sparkling wine that performed nobly in helping to put the bubbles in the Gay Nineties. It may well be that the current generation of Moët cellarmasters, having carpetbagged their way to California, too, may serve to put some bubbles in the sagging Seventies.

When the restaurant opened not quite a year and a half ago, it was under the command of a German called Udo Nechutnys who, having lived in France and become a disciple of Paul Bocuse, employed derivative dishes of the so-called *nouvelle* style. He quickly established a whisper campaign that went from ear to ear among the *haut monde* of high-life eaters, and even though the standard directions—follow Highway 29 and turn off at the Veterans' Home—will land you on an obscure back road—reservations for lunch or dinner are often required weeks in advance.

That the fare has not faltered since Nechutnys decamped is an unusual laurel for the current chef, Philippe Jeanty, and the overseers at Chandon who put him there. Jeanty is, after all, a bare 22 years old and when he came to California with Nechutnys, a little over a year ago, he didn't speak one lone word of English. He had worked, starting at the age of 14, at Moët & Chandon's company estate, called Trianon, which

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caters to buyers, vintners, gastronomes, and other visitors of importance, many of them possessed of highly developed palates. He also spent about two years working at several restaurants at Pontoise, which is some 20 miles from Paris, and there he met Véronique, who was 13 at the time. The army took his services for a year, after which he returned to Pontoise to work at a restaurant called, for reasons that are obscure even to its owners, Popcorn. Joseph Thuet, his mentor at Epernay, brought him back for a spell and then offered to send him to California.

Jeanty, with flaming red hair and enough freckles to appear as if he had been caught full in the face with a shaker of paprika, is no ordinary-looking Frenchman. It was perhaps this unusual appeal that inspired Véronique to follow him to California. Some hours before the Thanksgiving weekend began to settle over northern California last year, it was suddenly discovered that Véronique's visa was running out. Were she to leave, the grief for both of them would be unbearable, to say nothing of the effect on Philippe's nightly sonata at Chandon's range, a delicate talent on which the whole Moët & Chandon multimillion-dollar showcase in the U.S. rested. A further extension of her visa, already stretched to the diplomatic limits, was impossible. The only recourse was marriage, but since she was under age, approval had to come from one of her parents, divorced and living in France. Moreover, a preacher had to be found who was both at the parish for the holiday and willing to undertake the ceremony.

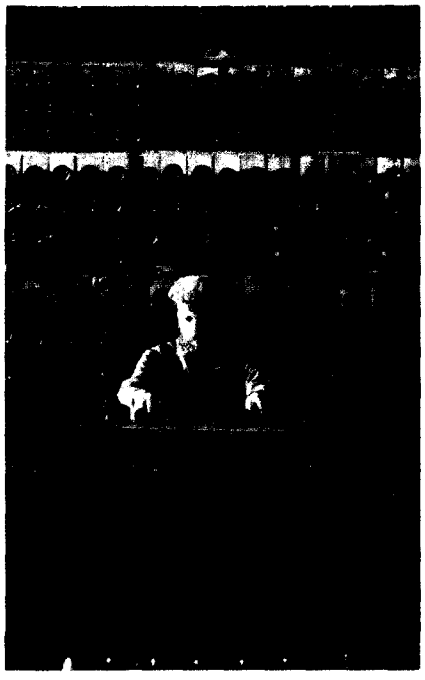
Frantic emissaries were dispatched in the honor of love and of Moët & Chandon, though not necessarily in that order. Ultimately, the Telex in Chandon's Yountville headquarters chattered, carrying *maman*'s permission cabled from Paris. Then the good Father Stephen Canny finally capitulated in mid-negotiation, saying "All right, we'll do it right now," and the ceremony was performed even though the unsuspecting attendants and the couple, not realizing they were to have such sudden success, were caught in sneakers and blue jeans. That the best man was a woman is indicative neither of the unbuttoned ways of California, nor of the new alignments of the sexes, but of the makeshift totality of the nuptials.

As Chandon's master chef, Jeanty is in the kitchen five days a week. (Both winery and restaurant are closed Mondays and Tuesdays.) A luncheon buffet serves 160 to 180. The dinner is formal and French, serving about 70. It is derivative because it follows such celebrated dishes as Paul Bocuse's *Loup en Croûte*, which in its local edition is a sea bass which has been blanketed in puff pastry decorated to look like a pastry fish. *Hure de Saumon* is Michel Guérard's salmon in an aspic with lemon, green peppercorns, and fresh tarragon. Bocuse's breast of duck, sliced rare, is on the menu, as is salmon with sorrel sauce done in the fashion of Jean and Pierre Troisgros (and others), which is an escalope of salmon sautéed in butter with the sorrel sauce added, a presentation very much à la mode at the moment.

As a copier, or more properly a translator, Jeanty brings to America some of the best of France's *maîtres*, as

The current generation of Moët cellar-masters may serve to put some bubbles in the sagging Seventies.

Peter Aaron



well as such individual creations as a highly styled trout served with two sauces (one of which is champagne) and stuffed with a lobster mousse; and a boned quail in aspic stuffed with a pâté of chicken livers. His desserts never allow the tricolor to falter: The mousse is lacquered with a soft, dark, rich chocolate that is almost candy and is swirled through the soft clouds of mousse when served; and his special *tarte aux fruits* (which requires half an hour's wait and a down payment of $7.50) is a huge puff pastry with raspberries, blueberries, or strawberries—your choice—in an inner well, depending upon the season. In our case it served four.

Four of us, threading our way through the minefields of prices with some caution, still managed to accrue a bill of $77, which for beautiful downtown Yountville might seem like an entry on the town budget, but as first-class French fare, even though once removed from the *maîtres* who created it, the prices are probably considered little more than *trinkgeld*. The beauty part is that as one of the two vineyard restaurants extant in California it may serve only its own wine and then only at the price charged in retail stores. In California, Chandon's Napa Valley Brut and its Blanc de Noirs sell for about $8.50 a bottle and that's what they are at the restaurant. The Blanc de Noirs, although it is freely pressed and the juice removed quickly from the skins, comes away with a faint blush that is salmon, copper, or more romantically, perhaps, a tint of red gold. It is the shade that the French, anatomical precisionists that they are, call *oeil de perdrix*, eye of the partridge.

Chandon's still wines are decorated with wondrous art nouveau labels, the panache dessert wine featuring a dreamy lady who seems to have been posing for Beardsley albeit in some disarray of personal toilette; a Pinot Noir and a chardonnay are bottled under the label called Fred's Friends, a rather back-slapping term for the Comte Frédéric Chandon de Briailles, president of Moët-Hennessey, who is called Fred by his friends.

The winery is open for tours, quite apart from the restaurant, and a flute of sparkling Napa Valley Chandon may be purchased. Among the visitors who have come have been the masters themselves—Vergé from Mougins, Guérard from Eugénie-les-Bains, and Bocuse himself, who now displays his name in neon lights in front of his restaurant at Collonges-au-Mont-d'Or (population 2,786). Ever since *Le Journal* said that "Paul Bocuse is better known in the United States than Valéry Giscard d'Estaing," and Giscard himself awarded the chef a Légion d'honneur, Bocuse has taken to handing out posters of himself wearing his decorations along with a forthright valiant look that seems to say that if the Fifth Republic is ever in trouble he will unfailingly lead his countrymen across a field of frozen aspic, and damn the torpedoes. A copy, suitably autographed with a flowing hand, hangs out there, forever memorializing the visit of the master to that nest of Gaul at Yountville, just off Route 29 (turn left at the Veterans' Home). ◉

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Sweet, Sour & Transcendental
–Writers, That Is

by Benjamin DeMott

ALL CALIFORNIA is divided, literarily, into three parts. But if you're not a native and haven't a map, you're bound to have trouble getting around.

The root of the problem is language. English as spoken and written on the Coast is chockablock with terms that are Greek to most of the rest of America. Some of these terms are labels for sectors of the human-potential movement; big in California, they produce terms that are little-known to Middle America. Cyra MacFadden, author of *The Serial* and an amusing chronicler of western *moeurs* for the *Pacific Sun*, describes a Marin County matron named

Sweet John Steinbeck

Rita who "had like *mutated* over the years through Gurdjieff, Silva Mind Control, actualism, analytical tracking, parapsychology, Human Life Styling, postural integration, the Fischer-Hoffman Process, hatha and raja yoga, integral massage, orgonomy, palmistry, Neo-Reichian bodywork and Feldenkrais functional integration. Currently she was commuting to Berkeley twice a week for 'polarity balancing manipulation.'"

The labels for certain objects that are commonplace only in the West also produce obscurities. Words and phrases—like "getting clear," a psychological process presumably like waiting for bubbles or dust to settle—are part of California's language of feeling, a language that has never played in Peoria.

Yet despite regional dialects and some other problems, like the confusing traditions of team-writing in Hollywood, the California literary scene isn't impossible to sort out. There are, as I say, three major schools—the Sweets, the Sours, and the Transcendentals—and, with a bit of study, each is as easy to distinguish from the others as a good Fetzer burgundy from a homely Almadén Mountain Red. None can be quickly dismissed for mediocrity. What they're producing at this moment is, to be sure, unequally vital, but all three schools have work of distinction in their pasts.

From the beginning the California Sweets have been by far the most popular Western writers. While the Sweets often adopt melancholy tones, they are at bottom optimists. (A major influence upon them seems to be the climate.) For them the sun always shines. Love thrives. Images of softness, such as pussywillows, proliferate. And most of the human beings who figure in their pages—children, old folks, people of low station, even people of ostensibly low morals—have hearts of gold. It's here that the influence of Bret Harte, the founder of the school of Sweets, is most visible. Harte, an Albany lad who moved to California in his teens, shortly thereafter began to populate the San Francisco settings of his fiction with whores, gamblers, and thieves who, though outwardly depraved, were really exceptionally nice inside. A good example is his "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," much admired by Dickens, a story in which a professional gambler cleans out a youth at cards, as a lesson, and then with a fatherly tap gives the lad back his money. The idea of the Good Bad Guy has flourished on the Coast ever since.

The best California writer to have been touched—*only* touched—by the influence of the Sweets is John Steinbeck, who was born in Salinas. The best living California writer affiliated with the School is Fresno's William Saroyan. His Sweet-ness can be seen in the holy hookers in *The Time of Your Life* or in "Harmony Blueblossom, a Little Old Lady in the Summertime" in *The Beautiful People*. The most famous living Sweet is Rod McKuen, born in Oakland, a poet of markedly inferior gifts. Consecutive thought, never prized by the Sweets, disappears altogether in McKuen's works; quiet tears and kindly comforters, on the other hand, abound. So too do blue skies, love a-dawning, and pussywillow:

It is the morning of our love
our sighs are all snow-silver white
and clean as breakfast napkins.

We'll go gently then into the day
keeping the morning in mind
for too soon the sun
eats up the shadows.

Come see the pussy willows grow
do up your hair and nothing else.
We'll buy up all the butterflies
and make the morning last.

At great moments in its past the school of the Sweets has been praised, justly, for its radiantly innocent humor (Saroyan's early stories) and for the depth of its commitment to the cause of the humble (*The Grapes of Wrath*); just now, with McKuen at its head, the school appears a shade sickly.

But it does have competition. Now as in the past, writers with a dourer, occasionally cynical perspective regularly challenge their more beamish brothers. The first of the challengers—the first

Sour Joan Didion

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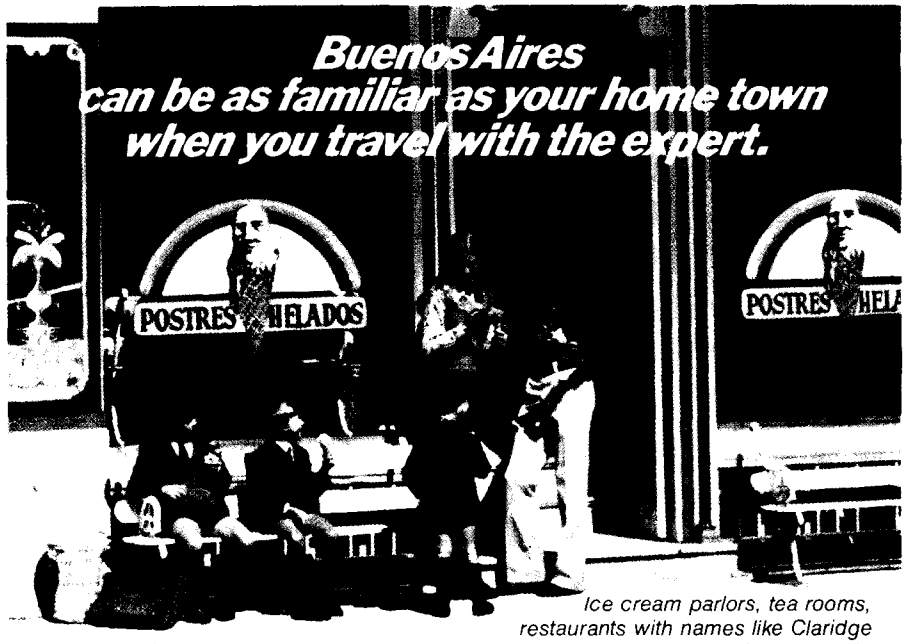
California Sour—was Ambrose ("Bitter") Bierce, Ohio-born but resident in San Francisco for his entire writing life. Bierce's focus was upon the human tendency to prefer, by a wide margin, oneself to others. The self-absorbed, anti-others spirit in contemporary California has often been remarked upon by social commentators and others. Describing what it means to be a native of the state, the novelist Joan Didion once declared that something in the "neural system" out west "resists negotiation ...stiffens at cooperation, tends to smell coercion in any plan involving more than three or four people.... In discussions which stress social purpose and cooperation," Ms. Didion added, "I tend to take a walk, or even to my bed...."

This turn of mind and feeling has, as its counterpart, a distinct tone of voice—flat, icy, "affect-less," sometimes downright mean-assed. (Bierce began one story with this sentence: "Early one June morning in 1872 I murdered my father—an act which made a deep impression on me at the time.")

Non-Californians (especially Hemingway) contributed enormously to the shaping of the tough-guy ironist whose characteristic modes of speech are phlegmatic. And it was a mystery writer, not a poet or novelist, who did most to establish, in the public imagination, the *bona fides* of deadpan-ness and nonconviviality. (The line of *a*social movie heroes that runs from Bogart to Nicholson and beyond has roots in Raymond Chandler.) But workers in the traditional literary genres have lately revivified California Sour, and among them none is more impressive than Joan Didion. The Didion voice, in essays as well as in fiction, is invariably deeply bored with the human surroundings, forever on the verge of commanding others to get the hell out of her life. ("On the whole I talk to no one," says the heroine of *Play It As It Lays*.) The impulse to leave the party, drop the marriage, shrug off the lame and the halt—"to get into oneself"—is vivid on every page. Didion herself is critical of this impulse, finding it neither "useful nor attractive." She knows its source: "I think differently because I come from the west coast of the United States." And she knows its consequences: the "locally endemic" obsession with the possibility of moving on again and yet again, whenever others press in too close. But she's powerless to contend against it. "I have on my passport an unused, current visa for the Solomon Islands. So does my husband. So does my daughter."

As may or may not be guessed from



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Transcendental Gary Snyder

the foregoing, the present writer, while an admirer of individual achievements within these schools, isn't an unreserved fan of either. The niceness of the Sweets seems, except at its best, too mindless, cute, and soft—too close to the norms of Pop Zen or second-rate Vonnegut. It speaks for little besides the weather—the absence of inclemency. The stoniness of the Sours is, except at *its* best, an affectation, not a heroic protest on behalf of the noble cause of American individualism but a sniffish attempt to put down local weirdos, tourists, and Johnny-come-latelies.

The true glory of California letters lies elsewhere. Its source isn't climate or history but geography. Its aim is somehow to be adequate to the awesome forces palpable in the Sierra, in Yosemite, in the stillness of redwood groves, in the clangor of Big Sur surf. Granted, many California writers who have imagined themselves as voices of mountains, seas, blue-gray immensities—seekers after the sublime—have failed embarrassingly. But in the face of the achievements, disparagement of the failures seems small-minded. John Muir suddenly immobilized while scaling the face of Mt. Ritter above the glacier... feeling his doom upon him, an obliterating vulnerability—and then struggling against it, battling the letting-go impulse until all at once—"beyond all mean egotism," as Emerson would have said—he feels life "blaze forth again with preternatural clearness" within him and discovers its very nature anew. ... Robinson Jeffers jamming his lines with the force of storm tides, sailing the rich currents overhead with the red-tailed hawk, rolling in huge seas of air.... These artists have few counterparts or none; unlike most of us they never "behold nature as exiles."

And their tradition is alive. Writers drawn to it today publish in such California magazines as *Nitty Gritty, Shining Clarity, Hard-Pressed, Sierra Journal, Western Slopes Connection, Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*, and the like. (One of the more original younger poets is Bill Hotchkiss, whose first book, *Climb to the High Country*, appeared just this year.) They have a conscious sense of identity, owing partly to the work of William Everson, a critic and poet now in his sixties, whose *Archetype West* (1977) studied West Coast poetry from a Jungian viewpoint, from Joaquin Miller through Jeffers and on to present writers.

And they have at their head a writer of genuine power: Gary Snyder. Absorbed with East-West philosophical interconnections, with links between Buddhist and native American Indian lore, and with Jungian themes, Snyder describes himself as a man setting out "to find somehow a way to actually 'belong to the land'... to see the world in life terms... to connect with plants and animals on a subconscious level." In a recent interview in a journal called *Unmuzzled Ox*, Snyder declared that "California poetry from its inception has tackled one of the major problems of Western culture: How does man relate to his environment? That's not the only question we all face, of course, but it's certainly one of the major questions." He acknowledges some links with New England and the East—particularly with Thoreau and Whitman. But he makes it plain that, for him, the immediate California past is pivotal. Praising Jeffers as a poet who "looks at the more naked interface of human and non-human," he goes on to generalize for his interviewer:

> There are two kinds of poetry. You can't discriminate between them as to value. Different jobs are being done. One of the jobs we do out in the Far West is describe environment because we are out next to the Pacific ... lots of desert, lots of mountains. They become one of the problems we chew on. If you live in New York City, you chew on a different set of problems.

Snyder's matchless gift is for the evocation of the first day of the world, the echt California exhilaration:

> All beaded with dew
> dawn grass runway
> Open-eyed rabbits hang
> dangle, loose feet in tall grass
> From alder snares.
> The spider is building a morning-web
> from the snared rabbit's ear to the snare
> down trail at sunrise

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wet berry brush
spiderweb in the eyes
Grey chunk rocks roll down
Splinter pines,
bark the firs
rest in maple shade.
I dance
On every swamp
sang the rabbit
once a hungry ghost
then a beast
who knows what next?

In Snyder's lines you don't feel a poet "discussing" man and nature, but rather embodying an at oneness:

Out the Greywolf Valley
in late afternoon
after eight days in the high meadows
hungry, and out of food
the trail broke into a choked clearing, apples
grew gone wild
hung on one low bough by a hornet's nest.
caught the drone in tall clover
lowland smell in the shadows
then picked a hard green one:
watched them swarm.
smell of the mountains still in me.
none stung.

"It is beginning to be possible," says this poet, "to look in one wide gaze at all that human beings have been and done on the whole planet, as one small part of the web of Gaia the earth-life Goddess." The option of adopting this perspective is not open to Everyman—and obviously not to the residents of Watts. There are many passages in Snyder's work that are marred by celebrations that seem forced or mechanical (see the mountain food catalogs in *Myths and Texts*). Sometimes, as Richard Wilbur recently charged in a *Paris Review* interview, Snyder is guilty of "Polaroid poetry." The Transcendentals are in essence teachers, and there's a limit to how much teaching any of us can endure.

Still, in late 20th-century writing you rarely come upon writers who think they know anything worth teaching, much less writers who are interested in sharing their knowledge. It's not just that, like Frost and Emerson, the California Transcendentals ask a certain height of us. (They do.) It's that at times they seem to be the only writers left in any region of this country with a clear idea of what elevation is. As such they're something quite different from a local school of letters. Their true region is everywhere; in literary terms, they're indispensable. ◉

Benjamin DeMott is a professor of English at Amherst and a contributing editor for Atlantic Monthly.

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When East Doesn't

When a New Yorkophile and a Los Angeles aficionado start talking, likely as not, the 50 states shrink to two: New York (City) and L.A. L.A. is sunshine, outdoors, inventiveness, laid-back, now (quoth the Los Angeleno), whereas New York is winter, indoors, uptight, analytical, and haunted. New York (quoth the lover of Gotham) is responsible, industrious, conscientious, whereas L.A. is fantastic, flaky, and rash. And so it goes. New York is Woody Allen. L.A. is Johnny Carson. New York is fashion. L.A. is fad. New York is the Kennedys (Bobby, especially). California is Ronnie and Jerry.

To re-ignite this perennial squabble, Saturday Review *offers two views of California, a New Yorker's and a native's, together with some speculation on why the two states of mind tend to speculate so much about each other.*

East

by Rhoda Koenig

TWO WEEKS AGO, I came out here to Los Angeles to help out Fred, who is starting to be ground down by it all. Fred moved here last year to strike it rich in mass entertainment, and, while he is rolling in the stuff, his soul suffers. His first day on the job, his colleagues urged him to come to the window with them and admire the sunset. He thought they were pointing out the beauties of nature in the West for his benefit and politely joined them, although, as far as Fred is concerned, nature is something that fouls up airplane schedules. Then he saw that they admired the sunset every day.

A little later he saw a bicyclist wearing a pyramid on his head, and was told by a helpful pedestrian that the cyclist wanted to concentrate his psychic energies. Some weeks after that, he confessed to his boss that he felt blocked, whereupon the boss invited Fred to borrow his anti-ion device, which, he said, promoted creativity. Then he (Fred) ordered a *croque-monsieur* in a respectable restaurant. It arrived with powdered sugar on top. That was when Fred sent out the distress signal. So here I am, making latkes and cynical remarks, and generally re-establishing contact with reality. Last night Fred had to work late and asked me to go to an opening of a restaurant called Le Dome, and take notes.

As the press release stated, Le Dome is "a contemporary version of a turn-of-the-century brasserie with a Bahama plantation influence as interpreted over the years by several different residents." This included aluminum plaques of birds in flight, iridescent bas-relief wallpaper, oxblood Oriental pottery, and yards and yards of glazed chintz. Several rooms had wall coverings and carpets of dark green velvet. It was a little like being inside an enormous smoking jacket.

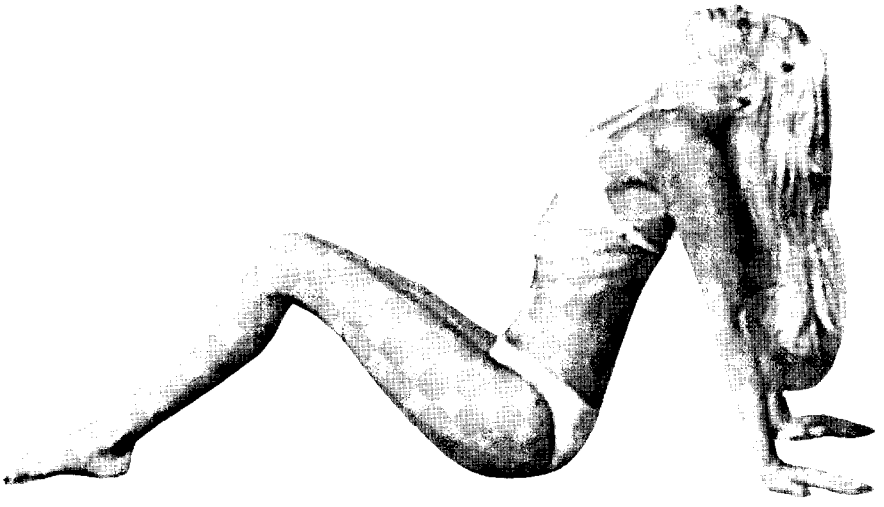
Among the "celebrities in attendance," I also learned from the press handout, were Ingrid Croce, Jerry Perenchio, John Reid (Elton John's manager), Bernie Taupin (Elton John's lyricist), and Contessa and Dan Cohn. There was no sign of Elton John. There was, however, a man in kilts, sporran, and lace ruffles, and an emaciated woman in a top hat, black sequins, and the new kind of hairstyle that looks as if it were done with a Cuisinart. In Hollywood one can never be too rich or too thin or too unkempt.

I ordered a drink at the circular bar, which was decorated with paintings of topiary animals in curious poses. (The only dome at Le Dome, by the way, is a

West

by Eve Babitz

NEW YORK, or "the East Coast" as it is sometimes called, seems unable to get over the West Coast. For a long time now, I've been reading articles in East Coast publications that invariably either make nasty cracks about the West Coast or dub it the capital of "popular trends." It appears that New York cannot bear for anyplace else to utter one peep. That California is constantly shattering New York's tranquility with peeps (from skateboarding to drive-ins) seems—to the people who write articles on the East Coast—either a barbaric indication of L.A.'s takeover or a fashionable symptom of L.A.'s takeover.



If one stands back and regards the East and West Coasts in perspective, one will see that the East Coast, too, produces popular trends, only the East Coast doesn't notice that it's doing it—how can you tell, if you're living on East 52nd Street, that you are the inspiration for someone in Tulsa? But imagine your surprise if someone were to call you up and ask why the *East* Coast seemed to start so many popular trends—like the hustle, raggedy permanents, the Broadway stage, women's rust-colored clothes, and expensive (real expensive) French restaurants. If someone telephoned from the West Coast to ask a New Yorker why certain drifts spread from the East Coast, it would never be boiled down to the weather. But if one compared New York's popular trends to Califor-.ia's, one would begin to notice that the popular trends from New York can all be done inside at night when it's snowing unless it's summertime, whereas the ones from the West Coast can be done outside any time.

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skeletal structure overhanging the bar, which gives the appearance of a rather limp gesture toward truth-in-advertising.) A tall man with center-parted bangs came up to me, smiling, and we had a pleasant conversation, interrupted only a few times by urgent messages from his pocket beeper about more interesting parties.

I started looking about for my table. People were rushing here and there in the dimly lighted warren, whispering anxiously to one another.

I found my place, and was immediately taken over by the lady on my left, a woman in unadorned black who asked me my sign, told me that the empty seat on my right was for her husband, a no-show, and that she wasn't really hungry because she had just eaten an enormous steak with mushrooms and peppers and onions. Then she asked my name. "Oh, I *love* you," she announced. "I just *love* Rhoda on TV. I watch it all the time and I feel that we have so much in common, because I'm also alone and I have nobody." We were seated across from a woman who, I was told, was the most important society columnist in Santa Barbara, and a man who wore under his dinner jacket what looked like one of my grandfather's pajama tops.

The first course was three thin slices of pâté that ranged from undistinguished to nasty, and a tomato stuffed with celery remoulade and garnished with watercress. "What's this?" demanded the lady in black. "That's called watercress." "Ugh, it looks awful. Here, have mine. I'm going to have another roll. Can I have your butter? I can't believe that I'm eating all this when I just had that big steak with mushrooms and peppers and onions."

Seafood in a pastry case. Not bad.

"Isn't this terrific?" She turned to the man on her left. "Do you know that before I came here I ate a really big steak with mushrooms and peppers and onions?"

"What are you doing here, Rhoda?" asked the man in the pajama top. "You don't seem very happy about it."

"Oh, I'm not unhappy. I'm just quiet."

"I'm quiet, too," said my new friend, happy at finding another bond. "I may talk a lot, but I'm quiet on the inside."

Boiled chicken with potatoes and cabbage. The kind of thing I thought people ate only at the insistence of a forceful grandmother.

"Do you know that Ringo Starr is here?" the lady in black asked. "I used to be his groupie five years ago in Miami. I was the groupie of Carl Palmer too—you know, Emerson, Lake, and Palmer? ELP? I mean, I didn't just ball them, you know, I'm their friend. Let's find Ringo and I'll introduce you.

"I don't think—oh, sure." When someone has your little finger pinched between two of hers like that, you go along. Two rooms surveyed, several

Meet West

The air in Southern California is filled with mist. The mist hangs through the mornings, creating yellow blurry outlines, and in the afternoons, the distances are sadder and grayer. The mist comes off the Pacific Ocean and is sustained over the land, blocked by the coastal range to the north, the San Gabriels to the east, some nondescript lumps to the south, and sea breezes from the west. Something called an "inversion" traps the mist from the top. When this mist mingles with fumes from cars and industrial gases—or even Indian campfires (the Indians called L.A. "the valley of smoke")—it is baked into smog by the sun. Smog keeps shadows from reaching the sidewalk and diffuses the light evenly over the landscape. Smog is great for making movies.

Southern California has had a peculiar effect on people since tourists from the Midwest and East Coast began traveling west around 1860. "The light," they wrote home to their friends, "just doesn't seem real."

Perhaps the West Coast might have remained nothing but a curiosity filled with people from Iowa forever, if the people who first made movies had stayed in those New Jersey studios where movie-making originated. But New Jersey's light was too unreliable; it rained and snowed there. Out west it stayed bright as day till it killed you and you prayed for rain.

By the time the world and New York's major critics cautiously granted that Charlie Chaplin was, perhaps, a genius, the West Coast—or Hollywood, actually—had cornered the market on the very concept of a popular trend. For never was a popular event more popularly available across the face of the earth. Even people who didn't speak English and couldn't read at all began to dream of Babylonian princesses and Errol Flynn.

The light *from* Los Angeles—the light shining out of movie projectors through 24 frames a second—cast shadows throughout the world with boundless passion, but before anyone quite knew what hit them, the Golden Age of Hollywood had come and gone. Though the light keeps shining, it has never been the same since. Today we all know too much to submit to the myths the movies once created so easily with shoulder pads and pencil-thin eyebrows—those images of virginity and torrid sexuality and class.

But the hold of those images, the glamour, is still so strong that one wonders if perhaps Hollywood is one of the reasons why people willingly eat up trends from the West Coast like popcorn. Hollywood as it used to be still captures the imagination.

Because winter never comes to L.A., it's very difficult to keep on believing in Hell, God's wrath, or even death. Those stout religions that make perfect sense in Oslo or Wisconsin, where freezing blizzards are inevitable, become top-heavy and baroque when viewed from a sidewalk cafe in California's 80° November weather. Few religions begun on the West Coast need be feared as more than fads, for they do not last longer than a snowflake on your mitten when forced to travel.

The weather is also behind the quest for health and physical beauty. No one who looks at him or herself in a mirror on one of L.A.'s commonplace scary white days feels safe unless he or she sees a poreless and tan and energetic face. Those East Coast potbellies and

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East

waiters cursing, but no Ringo.

"I'm sure we'll see him after, dear. Why don't we sit down again?"

"No, now that I'm up I want to go to the bathroom. Will you go to the bathroom with me, Rhoda? *Please*. Let's go there and *relax*."

Once bitten, twice shy. "Well, I don't really need to go. Why don't you go now, and I'll see you in a little while."

She might have been a new friend, but she was a fast one. "You ought to meet my friend Laurie," she said as we sat down again. "She's really in love with me. I mean she's not a lesbian or anything, but we're lovers, you know?"

"I'm surprised that you can eat all that chicken when you just had that big steak with mushrooms and peppers and onions."

"Oh, be quiet," she giggled. "Are you stoned, Rhoda? You look a little stoned, but I guess you're just relaxed. Now, I'm not stoned at all. What you're seeing is the *real me*." She turned to the man on her left. "What's that—is *that* your son?" She turned back to me. "This man's son is the world's champion surfer in the *whole world*, and I used to surf with him *all the time*, but I never knew that was his *son*."

"Does that do anything to you, Rhoda?" rumbled the man in the pajama. "Does surfing turn you on?"

The society columnist came to my rescue. "Is there much surfing in New York?" she asked.

Endive and watercress salad. Several shredded leaves huddled together in the center of a large plate.

"What kind of people do you meet at parties in New York?" the lady in black asked. "If you walked into a New York party, who would be there?"

"Well, Norman Mailer."

"Uh-huh. Who else?"

"Kurt Vonnegut."

"Yeah. And?"

"Joseph Heller."

"Who else?"

"George Plimpton."

Long pause. "I don't know them. Are they big on the East Coast?"

Frozen orange soufflé. Hollowed-out orange filled with rock-hard sherbet, topped with a browned meringue.

"John Travolta lives next door to us," the lady in black continued. "Have you heard of him? He makes me so excited. I see him in the street all the time—you know, he walks up and down the street. Oh, I get so excited I just want to *squeeze* him." She dug her fingers into my thigh. "Oh, Rhoda, let's go to the *bathroom*."

"Well, I guess I don't feel like it just yet. How did you like your dinner?"

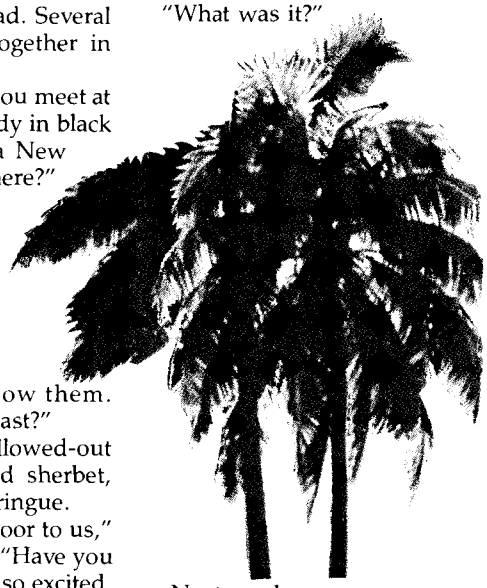
"My what?"

"Dinner."

"Did we just have dinner?"

"Yes, we did."

"What was it?"



Next week we go to an open-house to celebrate the new office of a doctor of aesthetic surgery. I can hardly wait. ◉

Rhoda Koenig is a magazine editor who lives, obviously, in New York.

West

pasty complexions and skinny legs simply glare too strongly in L.A., while in New York, all those skyscrapers and gloomy apartments and winter clothes and streets in shadow can make your own body seem beside the point.

Now, I've been asked by some editors on the East Coast to predict what L.A. fads will spread throughout the nation next year. Will the pork-and-avocado burrito I ate last night be knocking them dead next fall? Is the roller-rink every one of my friends now blazes around the new thing? Are men going to stop being so wishy-washy now that Nick Nolte is here? Well, the burrito was divine, the roller-rink is gleeful, and Nick Nolte isn't that bad.

It's impossible to tell when one is living in a place which are the popular trends and which are things that have been around forever but you are only discovering now. But I'll make a stab at predicting. Maybe I'll even be right.

First off, I have a feeling that Jerry Brown is tired of having our nation's government centered all the way across the continent in Washington, D.C., and when he becomes Chief of State, he'll eliminate the concept of a stationary nation's capital in one massive budget overhaul. All the politicians will have to move to motels and eat egg-salad sandwiches like he does.

Second, I think that concern about health will catch on more and more, and people will begin asking, "What's *in* this damn thing anyway?"

Third, that more and more women—even those who hate California and wish they'd never heard of it in the first place—will be going to yoga classes, that ancient West Coast rite.

And finally, for the kids—since all the kids I've seen on the West Coast this year have been carrying $40 Styrofoam surfboards—Boogie Boards—I predict that this Christmas, children in Denver and Des Moines will wake up and find their very own Boogie Boards under the tree.

I realize as I sit here that I have not taken the question why most popular trends seem to begin on the West Coast as seriously as serious people might hope. The West Coast's insistent peeps ought to have a more profound explanation than just weather and movies. If New York had been shown a skateboard a few years ago, it would have taken one look, laughed, and said, "Impossible, who would ever buy a thing like that?" Whereas the West Coast jumped on and flew down the driveway and broke its wrist.

The East Coast regards the West Coast as a place where real art and true culture cannot survive—where all that can flourish in the L.A. sun is weeds (which occasionally catch on and become popular trends). New York, of course, may not really think this about the West Coast, but in East Coast magazine journalism, writing about West Coast rootlessness is surely a popular trend. Journalists write that L.A. is vulgar, pandering, brainless (or mindless), smoggy, crazy, the place where cops give people tickets for jaywalking.

Being from L.A. myself my judgment is probably colored, but I've always felt that things here are real enough. The light and shadows may look suspiciously fake when you step out of a plane and feel the day roll over you like a tank, but the light will always keep shining from the west, throwing shadows across dark rooms even though it forgets about falling at one's feet and does not seem as real as it is on the East Coast where the weather is as true as an unhappy ending. ◉

Eve Babitz is the author of Eve's Hollywood *and* Slow Days, Fast Company: The World, the Flesh & L.A.

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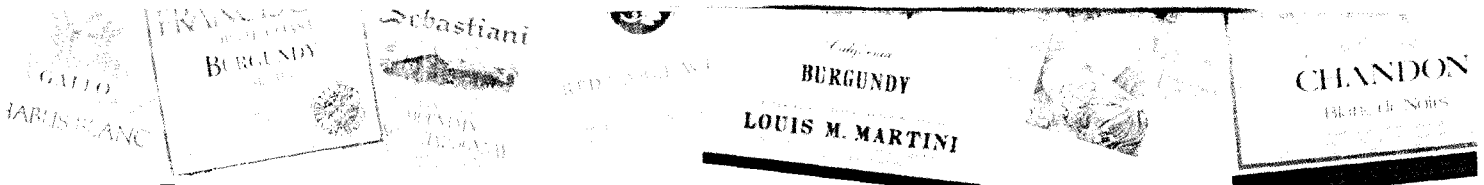

California Wines Come of Age

by Frank J. Prial

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, a fellow appeared one day at the Robert Mondavi Winery in California's Napa Valley. He was, he said, doing research on the wine industry. With traditional wine country hospitality, the Mondavis invited him in and answered his questions.

In due time, a novel appeared exploiting the long-standing feud between Robert Mondavi and his brother, Peter, who runs the Charles Krug winery a few miles up the road. It was obviously the work of the "researcher."

"We never did find out who he was," said Robert's son, Michael. "He used one name when he came here and another on the book, neither of which apparently is the right one."

The novel dropped deservedly from sight, which is probably just as well. The Mondavi story needs a Verdi, or at least a John Steinbeck: Two brothers, sons of a penniless Italian immigrant who made a fortune in the vegetable business, run rival wineries a few miles apart. They wage a spectacular fight through the courts for the family fortune. One brother forces the other out of the business, then relents. They make up and both prosper.

A publisher said recently that there are now in production at least three major motion pictures with wine themes. There are at least as many novels on wine in the works, too.

The only question is, Why did it all take so long? The wine business—the California wine business—is one of the last authentic frontiers of American independence and creativity. From the enormous, space-station-like wineries of the Gallos to the tiniest new converted barn in some remote corner of Mendocino County, the wine world in California is bustling with the kind of vitality and optimism a lot of people were convinced had disappeared from the American scene.

From one end of the state to the other, new wineries open almost every month. Five years ago, established wine men said there was no more room in the Napa Valley, but the *Redwood Rancher*, a magazine that annually lists all the new wineries in the coastal counties, has listed seven new ones in Napa since last fall. The wine writer William Massee uses a phrase that describes the California wine scene perfectly. He calls it "joyous anarchy."

Bordeaux, in France, is known for its superb red wines. They differ in style from chateau to chateau and in quality from region to region. But the name Bordeaux remains synonymous with a certain kind of red wine. No one will ever say that about California.

Consider, for example, the zinfandel grape—California's own—which originally produced a blending wine, used by major producers in their inexpensive "burgundies." Clever wine makers have since turned the zinfandel into a light, smooth table wine. But, being Californians, they didn't stop there. Soon, adventurous vintners were making zinfandel rosés, white zinfandels, sparkling zinfandels, heavy, dark zinfandels that need years of aging, and even rare, high-alcohol zinfandels that look and taste like port.

Then, in their exuberant disregard for wine-making tradition, the Californians took the unloved Petite Sirah grape, which had produced a rough, almost black wine, and tamed it into an excellent American equivalent of the great Hermitage wines of the Rhône Valley.

At their best, the Californians have produced rieslings to rival the best in the Rheingau and clarets that have astounded the French. In their zanier moments, they concoct things called Ripple and Bali Hai, and they have even made (God only knows why) a chocolate wine.

California's lively wine world came of age in the early 1960s. Those were the years when Donn Chappellet and Jack Davies left prosperous Los Angeles businesses and came north to grow grapes and make wine, Chappellet to build his magnificent modern winery on Pritchard Hill and Davies to take over the old Schramsberg champagne cellars near Calistoga. During the same time Mike Robbins got out of engineering in San Francisco to start Spring Mountain, and Rodney Strong wound up a career in show business to start Sonoma Vineyards.

Scores of others have followed those early dropouts from the lockstep corporate world. Some are young, and come with a wife and baby and a lot of hope. Others, like Ely Callaway, are older. After his retirement as chairman of Burlington Industries in New York City, Callaway built his dream winery in a mountain pass north of San Diego.

A few, like Brooks Firestone, the grandson of the founder of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, are quite wealthy. He established the Firestone Vineyard, a multimillion-dollar operation, in a corner of his father's cattle ranch north of Santa Barbara.

Several, like Justin Meyer at Franciscan Vineyards and Mike Grgich at Grgich Hills Cellars, both in Napa, came to work for someone else (Christian Brothers and Chateau Montelena) and could not resist going out on their own. Still others, like Robert Mondavi, broke away from conservative wine-growing families to try new methods and strive for new levels of excellence.

The 1960s were a time of change for the traditionalists, too. Ernest and Julio Gallo, who make more wine than anyone in the world, began to think of producing top quality table wines. August Sebastiani, who started out, with his father Samuele, producing anonymous bulk wines for eastern bottlers, began his extraordinary rise from obscurity to become one of the largest producers of premium wines in the state. Even today, as Sebastiani watches his bottling lines clank on through the night, he shakes his head in disbelief and says: "I don't know what we're doing, but we're obviously doing something right."

The Sebastianis in Sonoma, the Martinis in Napa, the Mirassous in Santa Clara, and the Wentes and Concannons in Livermore are elder statesmen of California wine country. They were a bit disconcerted by the bearded, sandaled youngsters who came into the valleys at first—the "boutiquers" August Sebastiani calls them—but they were generous with advice and encouragement. They also observed, when anyone asked, that wine booms are inevitably followed by wine busts.

In 1973, they were proven right. There was too much wine around and the country was in the middle of a recession. Prices plummeted. Curiously, it was not the naive "boutiquers" who suffered, but the big newcomers: Sonoma Vineyards almost went bankrupt, and Pillsbury, which had purchased Souverain Cellars, took a look around and decided to get out of the business.

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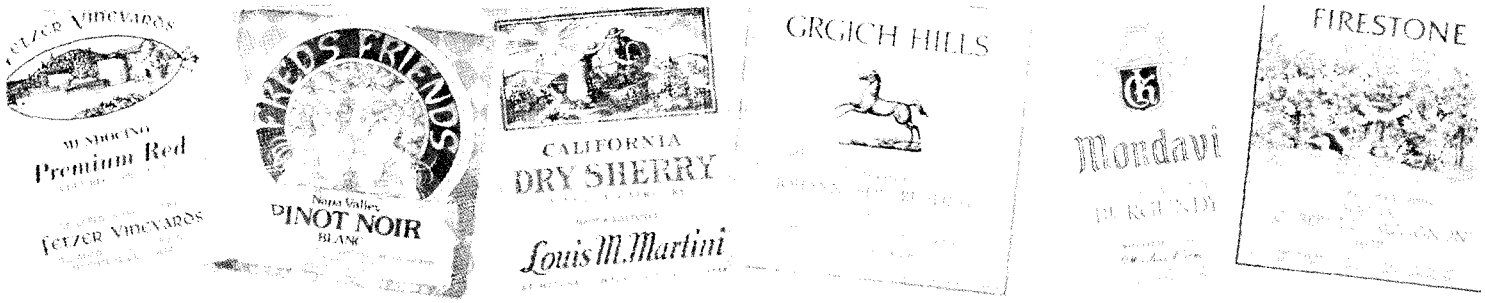

The original Souverain, in Napa, is now called Rutherford Hills and is owned by several of the partners of Freemark Abbey, one of the better-known premium wineries in the valley. The big winery in the Alexander Valley is still called Souverain, but it is owned by a limited partnership of growers from the three North Coast counties—Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino.

Ask a French grower what he considers the most important element in growing wine grapes and he will say, without hesitation, the soil. Ask a California grower the same question and he will say the soil—and the climate. The accepted wisdom holds that California "has no vintages because every year is the same—perfect." But every year is decidedly not the same in California, as anyone who has read about the recent two-year drought in the west should know. Most of California's best vineyards are at about the same latitude as Algeria. To make wines of the caliber of the best French and German wines in what amounts to a Mediterranean climate obviously takes some doing. What's more, instead of having one benign climate all the time, California has many different climates.

Back in 1938, two University of California scientists, Albert Winkler and Maynard Amerine, classified these climates by their average daily temperatures during the growing season. They came up with five regions. Region I includes parts of Sonoma and Napa and corresponds to the temperature in Trier, Germany, and in Beaune in the Burgundy region of France. Region II takes in larger sections of Sonoma and Napa and corresponds to the Piedmont region of Italy and most of Bordeaux.

What is especially interesting is that Professors Winkler and Amerine found little pockets of region I weather all over the state, including places that had been assumed to be fit only for cactus and jackrabbits.

That is why Ely Callaway, today, grows grapes and makes wine in a mountain pass not too far from the Mexican border, why Brooks Firestone can produce superb wines on what looks like nothing but grazing land northwest of Los Angeles, and why Monterey County, once used mostly for growing lettuce and fruit, is becoming one of the most important wine regions of the country.

Certain mountain passes funnel cool, damp winds off the ocean each night, offsetting the hot sun of the day and providing the minimal moisture fine grapes need to thrive. These micro-climates, as they are called, make California the wine paradise it has become.

But what about the wines themselves? Compared to what they were 15 years ago, most California wines are exceptionally good, but compared to what they could be 10 or 20 years from now, they are probably only fair. There is, unfortunately, a tendency to compare California wines to French wines, vintage for vintage, but it just doesn't work.

In northern California, 1974 was a great year. In Bordeaux it was average. California wines often develop more rapidly than Bordeaux wines. A 1974 California cabernet probably will overshadow a 1974 Bordeaux right now. Ten years hence, just the opposite might be true.

California Pinot Noirs rarely match good Burgundies, which are made from the same grape, but Californians keep trying. "We will get it. I know we will," predicts Richard Peterson, president and winemaker at Monterey Vineyards.

When skeptical Easterners shrug, the Californians bring up chardonnay. This shy-bearing grape produces the great white wines of Burgundy, from Chablis and the fashionable Pouilly-Fuissé to the rare Montrachet. Twenty years ago, old vineyard hands scoffed at newcomers who set out to match those wines. Today, if there is any area where the Californians consistently come up to and surpass the French, it is in its fine chardonnays.

The chardonnays of such wineries as Chateau St. Jean, Freemark Abbey, Chateau Montelena, David Bruce, and Burgess Cellars are wines of the first rank. Costing up to $12 a bottle, they are not for everyday drinking. Moreover, they are produced in such small quantities that few people get to try them, regardless of cost. Until recently, fanatical California drinkers snapped them up, practically at the winery doors.

David Bruce's chardonnays, the zinfandels of Ridge Vineyards or Clos du Val, and the cabernets of Heitz Cellar or

Continued on page 66

Judging the Jugs

Franciscan Vineyard's Burgundy. A recent addition to the ranks of California generic wines, this one has been winning prizes everywhere, and deservedly so. Resembles a much more expensive wine.

C.K. Mondavi Burgundy. A slightly oaky taste that is most appealing. One of the last of the old-style, full-bodied jug wines still widely available at a reasonable price.

Gallo Hearty Burgundy. Immensely popular across the nation. The Model A of American table wines, it seems to have lost some of its heartiness in recent years. Worth trying nonetheless, just to see what all the fuss is about.

Sebastiani Vineyards Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon. It's fairly expensive for a jug wine, but the genuine cabernet style makes it worth the money.

Robert Mondavi Red Table Wine. One of the first of the new breed of jug wines created in the European tradition for more sophisticated tastes. Dryer and a bit more subtle than old-fashioned jug wines.

Navalle Burgundy. A better than average jug wine from Inglenook. From a second level of wines under this famous label.

Inglenook's North Coast Counties Vintage Burgundy. Better, but less widely available than the Navalle Burgundy, Vintage Burgundy is a big, rich wine similar in style to the Franciscan. It also costs a few cents more.

Fetzer Mendocino Premium Red. An excellent wine made entirely of carignane grapes and aged in small oak casks.

Sebastiani Mountain Pinot Chardonnay. The Mountain Pinot Chardonnay doesn't have the varietal quality of the Mountain Cabernet, but it is a good, fresh white wine. Beats most of the blends called, unfortunately, "Chablis."

Gallo Chablis Blanc. A little sweet, but a consistent value and widely available. Better than the Hearty Burgundy and best when drunk extremely cold.**FP**

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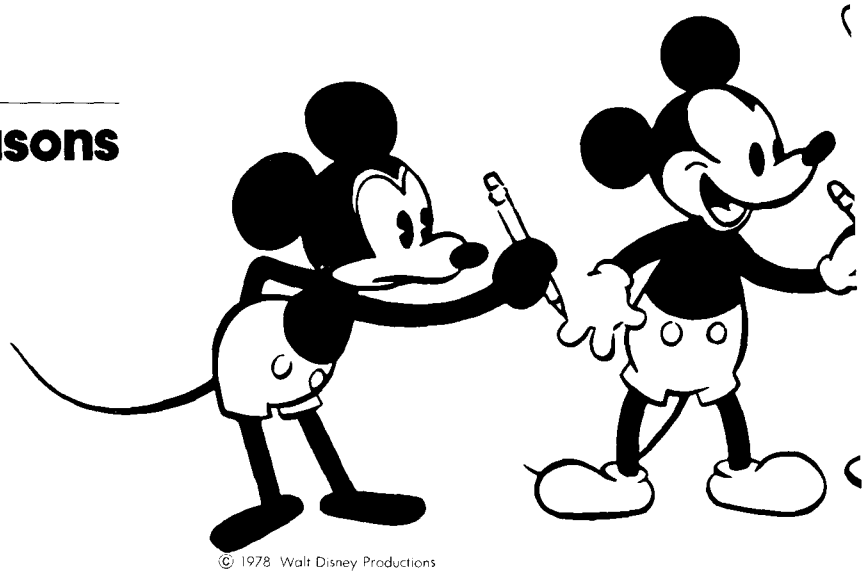
THE ARTS

A Mouse for All Seasons

by John Culhane

"You're the top!
You're the Colosseum,
You're the top!
You're the Louvre Museum,
You're a melody from a symphony
by Strauss,
You're a Bendel bonnet,
A Shakespeare sonnet,
*You're Mickey Mouse."**



© 1978 Walt Disney Productions

MICKEY MOUSE has always been a star. When Mickey first played New York City's Music Hall, Cole Porter would bring his dinner guests there just to see the cartoon. In 1935, Arturo Toscanini asked that *The Band Concert* be stopped and re-run because he so enjoyed the Mousetro's sly caricature.

Arguably the best-known imaginary creature in history, Mickey Mouse will be 50 years old on November 18. From poor kids to presidents and once-and-future kings, millions have given their hearts to this cartoon personality. *The New York Times* reported in 1935 that "the King of England won't go to the movies unless Mickey Mouse is on the bill." Today, Emperor Hirohito wears a Mickey Mouse watch.

That this mouse is still so loved is indicated by the dimensions of his 50th birthday party. Celebrations will include a black-tie dinner attended by the President of the United States at the Library of Congress; a party at the White House for Mickey and some heretofore underprivileged children, hosted by Amy Carter; an NBC television special; and retrospectives at the Chicago Film Festival, the American Film Institute Theater at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan. At New York's Broadway Theater—which was called the Colony when Mickey made his debut in *Steamboat Willie*, "the FIRST animated cartoon with SOUND," at 2 PM on Sunday, November 18, 1928—a plaque will be dedicated exactly a half century later.

Mickey began life as an expression of Walt Disney's innate optimism. The cartoonist had just lost his job—making Oswald the Rabbit cartoons for a New York distributor named Mintz—but instead of sinking into depression, Walt came up with Mickey.

"Walt designed a mouse, but it wasn't very good," Otto Messmer, creator and designer of Felix the Cat, once told me. "He was long and skinny. Ub Iwerks redesigned the character."

"It was the standardized thing," Iwerks—the one animator on Disney's staff who had not stayed with Mintz—told me in 1967. "Pear-shaped body, ball on top, couple of thin legs. If you gave it long ears, it was a rabbit. Short ears, it was a cat. Ears hanging down, a dog. With an elongated nose it became a mouse. Mickey was the same basic figure, initially."

Initially. But Iwerks made the ears big circles—no matter which way the head turned. In fact, Mickey's face is a trinity of wafers—and the circular symbol, as C.G. Jung has told us, "always points to the single most vital aspect of life—its ultimate wholeness." Simple round forms portray "the archetype of self," he said, "which, as we know from experience, plays the chief role in uniting apparently irreconcilable opposites and is therefore best suited to compensate the split-mindedness of the age."

Personally, I have always thought that the secret of Mickey's appeal lies in the fact that his design is the perfect expression of what he symbolizes—survival. "Our work is a caricature of life," Disney told me in 1951. Mickey is a caricature of the optimistic adventurer that mankind has had to be to survive through the centuries. Somehow, the three interlocked circles that make up his famous face communicate that.

This is pretty heavy to hang on a cartoon rodent, and yet, things have kept happening involving Mickey for half a century now that suggest he is communicating something more profound than did Felix the Cat or the Kewpie Doll—or any of the other fads he has outlived.

There is even a fairy-tale ring to the fact that it was Disney's third try that succeeded. The first Mickey Mouse cartoon, *Plane Crazy*, in which Mickey burlesqued Lindbergh's conquest of the Atlantic, could not find a distributor; nor could the second, *Gallopin' Gaucho*, in which the mouse caricatures Douglas Fairbanks the swashbuckler and rescues Minnie from Peg-Leg Pete. Part of the reason was that they were silent cartoons. Al Jolson's *Jazz Singer* had already created a demand for sound pictures, so the indomitable Disney made his third attempt, *Steamboat Willie*, the first synchronized sound cartoon.

BEFORE MICKEY was a year old, the stock market crashed. The optimistic mouse may have succeeded initially because of his winning looks and the novelty of sound, but now he was an idea whose time had come. In the long days of the Depression, fellow optimist FDR found Mickey a tonic. "My husband always loved Mickey Mouse," Eleanor Roosevelt later wrote, "and he always had to have the cartoon in the White House." While Roosevelt battled economic royalists, the epidemic world lawlessness, and fear itself, Mickey took care of a mail bandit (*The Mail Pilot*, 1933), an escaped gorilla (*The Pet Store*, 1933), and a small-time gang of cutthroats (*Shanghaied*, 1934).

It wasn't just morale-building. The mouse is credited with saving at least two other corporations besides the Disney Studio—the Lionel Corporation,

*Cole Porter, "You're the Top"
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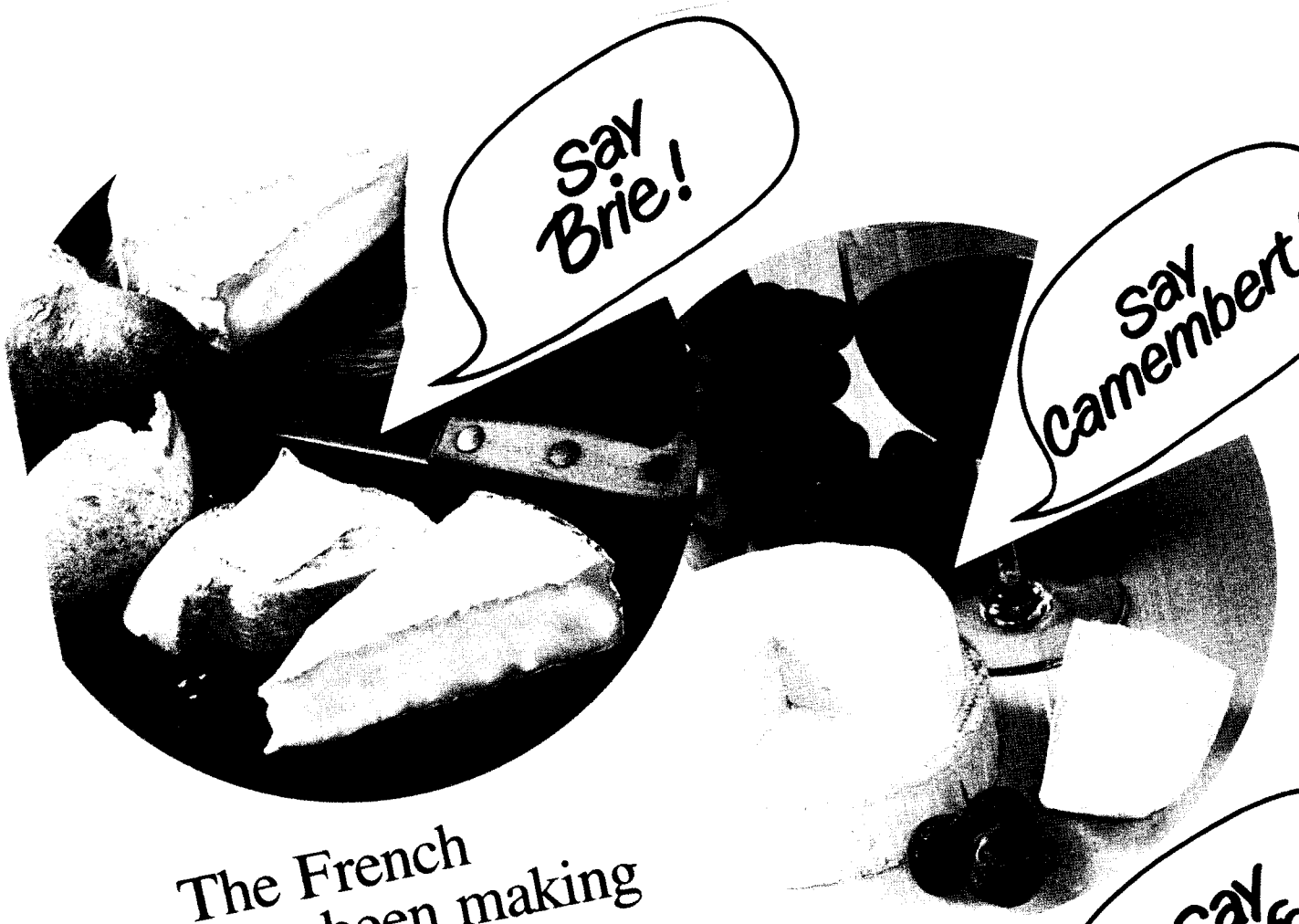

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"21" Brands, Inc., N.Y., N.Y. 90 Proof Rum

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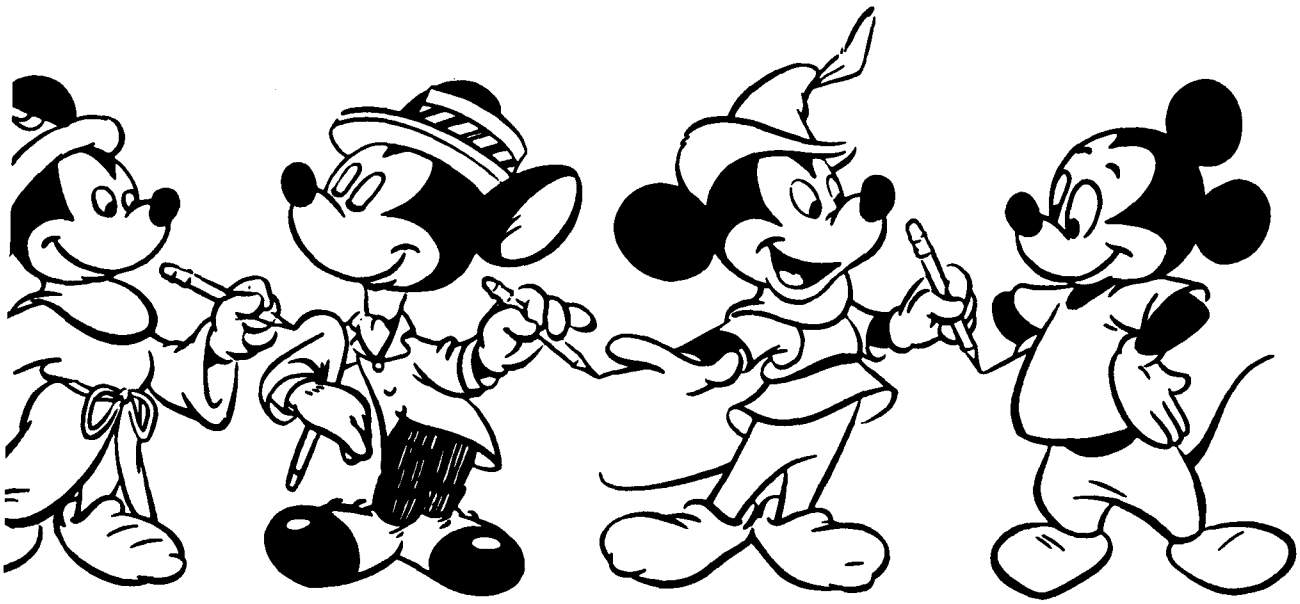

manufacturer of toy trains, which was rescued from receivership by the sale of 253,000 handcars carrying Mickey and his girlfriend Minnie, and Ingersoll, which brought out the Mickey Mouse wristwatch just in the nick of time.

Sadly, in the Fifties, the Disney Studio stopped making new Mickey Mouse cartoons. Television had destroyed the old market for theatrical short subjects, and the production costs of new Mickey Mouse cartoons were beyond the budgets of television. Kids could still see the old cartoons on Disney's new television series "The Mickey Mouse Club," which caused those large, round mouse ears to sprout on youngsters all over the nation. But Mickey, like America, was losing his identity as an optimistic adventurer—though not as a survivor.

The continuing power of his form to communicate was never in question. In the late Fifties, Dr. Tom Dooley, the "jungle doctor" and founder of Medico, was running a hospital ship off the coast of Southeast Asia that provided free medical care for whoever would come out of the jungle to his clinic. "Dooley had a problem getting children," recalled John Hench, an artist who is one of the key figures in the ongoing design of Disneyland and Disney World. "He wanted to know if he could use our characters—Mickey particularly. ... Dooley didn't understand what was wrong at the time, but he knew from the experience he'd had that the Red Cross didn't work well—so he put Mickey on the side of his ship. Suddenly, kids who had refused to come out of the bush happily stood in line for a medical examination. Obviously, hardly any of them had ever seen a picture of Mickey. But they recognized something. It wasn't the cartoon character, it was the symbol....

"Walt had an instinct for these very old survival patterns," said Hench. "I think that if anyone really wanted to take the time to examine it, he would see that these survival patterns are the basis of our aesthetics, our sense of pleasure. And Walt was always interested in why designs had their power. After all, he was in the business of communicating with form."

I remember two moments in the Sixties and Seventies in which I felt the force of Mickey as symbol of survival. In 1969 I went to the Middle East as a foreign correspondent and visited a border kibbutz in Israel and a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. Children on both sides of the barbed-wire frontier immediately pointed to the tiny figure on my wristwatch and said the name that is the same in Hebrew and Arabic: "Mickey Mouse."

And I recall seeing, in 1971, a bootleg cartoon called *Mickey Mouse in Vietnam* that some artist not with the Disney Studio had taken the risk and the trouble to animate in defiance of copyright laws. In this short cartoon, Mickey Mouse is an American soldier. He lands in Vietnam. And is immediately shot dead. End of cartoon.

At the Disney Studio today, a new generation of artists wants to make Mickey Mouse cartoons for the Eighties—but Ron Miller, the company's executive vice president in charge of production and creative affairs, contends there is no more market for theatrical shorts now than there was when the studio stopped making them, and still no way to turn a profit on Disney-style animation for TV.

But if they were able to do more Mickey Mouse shorts, the young animators would be unlikely to pick up where Mickey was left in the early Fifties, a suburban householder living in a quiet middle-class neighborhood with his sadly subdued pup, Pluto.

"The Mickey who was an adventurer—that's the real thing," said Andy Gaskill, probably the finest all-around artist of the new Disney generation. "He had a case of schizophrenia right after the war and he's never been the same since. You have to take him into the realm of fantasy," said Gaskill. "You can't keep him in the suburban home. Imagine Mickey in space, battling old Peg-Leg Pete—except now, Pete has retrojets in his peg-leg."

I SUPPOSE it does no harm for Disney employees to dress up in Mickey Mouse costumes and shake hands and have their pictures taken with children at Disneyland or Disney World. But this is not the historic Mickey Mouse, the maker of an era, an animated cartoon character whose personality is so definite that you were sure he must get itchy being merely a greeter or a master-of-ceremonies or a corporate symbol. Having vanquished Peg-Leg Pete in countless tight spots, from the Wild West in *Two-Gun Mickey* to the Frozen North in *The Klondike Kid;* having toppled giants in *Giantland*, *The Brave Little Tailor*, and *Mickey and the Beanstalk;* having conducted a band in a tornado in *The Band Concert;* having commanded even the oceans and the planets in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, he would surely now be eager to blast off into the farthest reaches of outer space. Then woe be unto Darth Vader if he should venture so far out of his class as to kidnap Minnie Mouse! ◉

John Culhane, will be master-of-ceremonies for the Mickey Mouse birthday celebrations at the Library of Congress and at the American Film Institute Theater.

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LOOKOUTS

"Goldfish"

MoMA's Boy

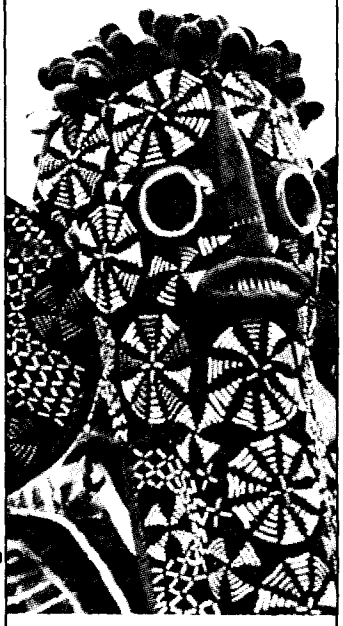
Take a deep breath before you plunge into *"Matisse in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art"*—even long-time devotees have found that the intensity of one or two of his highly colored, never-stark works is enough to make one gasp. Through January 30, 1979 MoMA, in New York City, is presenting an exhibit of 179 paintings, drawings, sculptures, and cut-outs that will provide an overview of virtually every period of the master's career. If the Metropolitan's Monet show made you feel like you'd just been on vacation, the Matisse will make you want to dance.

Saturday's Review

SR's indefatigable team is up at bat again. For Crostic fans, Tom Middleton scores with 50 new puzzles and complete solutions in *Crostics 80* (Simon & Schuster). Balletomane Walter Terry leaps into the field with *Great Male Dancers* (Anchor Press) as well as a selection of reviews and articles aptly titled *I Was There* (Marcel Dekker). And from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Pulitzer Prize-winner and our film critic, a home run with his new, comprehensive biography, *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Houghton Mifflin).

From Chorus Line to Ballroom

If director and choreographer Michael Bennett's *Ballroom* is as successful as his *A Chorus Line* has been, it'll soon be an institution. The show, which will open in New York on December 13, is based on CBS's well-received teleplay *Queen of the Stardust Ballroom*. In both versions a lonely widow goes to a dance hall where she meets a mailman/poet, who helps her find a new life. In the teleplay her new life is followed by an early death, but *Ballroom's* ending has been "slightly altered." All's fair in love and musicals.



Black and Beautiful

Photographers haven't always been welcome in remote and primitive parts of the world. Suspicious tribesmen have been known to demolish the black boxes that threaten to steal their spirits. Nevertheless, Michel Huet has managed to capture with extraordinary vividness the culture of the sub-Sahara in *The Dance, Art, and Ritual of Africa* (Pantheon). The 261 photographs are accompanied by text prepared by Jean Laude and Jean-Louis Paudrat.

The New Klux Klan

Fifty years ago, one out of every eight Americans was part of a collective nightmare, a vision of burning crosses, surreptitious knights in bleached bedsheets, and spilled blood—the Ku Klux Klan. But by the late Sixties, government pressure and public indignation over the organization's brutal tactics caused the Klan to fade.

Now the nightmare may be recurring. In "The New Klan," to be aired on most PBS stations on November 19 at 8 PM (check local listings for times), we see the old Klan, and taste the temper of the new Klan: a 100-mile-long blockade at the Mexican border, "White power" T-shirts, and articulate Klansmen running for state senate instead of leading lynch mobs.

Today, recruits come from unhappy whites across the country who feel ignored and abused. We can only feel sorry they've gotten themselves turned so upside down. Two leaders of the movement, Tom Metzger, California organizer, and Robert Shelton, Imperial Wizard, best express contemporary Klan credo: "Jews are a parasite people," and "The Negro is an animal." Some things, it seems, never change.

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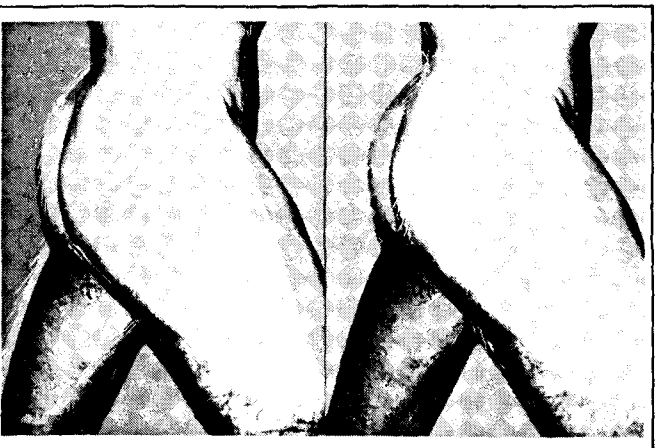
Privates Showing

Pale prince of radical chic, Andy Warhol is at it again. He's gone topless—and bottomless—in Paris, Venice, Los Angeles, and now in Vancouver, British Columbia. His new exhibition, "Torsos," features paintings of unnamed bodies—from necks to knees—and will be on display from November 3 to December 8 at the Ace Gallery.

Warhol has always been one to skirt—or topple over—the edge of respectability, and his "Torsos" contains what may be the most provocative material the artist has shown to date. His 50 paintings focus on back, front, and side views of male and female nudes, all in bright acrylic on canvas.

This pubic display is open to the public, and anyone wishing to see it should go before the paintings are sold to private collections and scattered museums.



Bicycle Cycles

If that 15-mile bike excursion has left you breathless, you might want to pick up *Bicycle People* by Roland C. Geist (Acropolis Books). In this, his latest in a series of bicycle books, Geist recounts tales of the early inventors, daredevil racers, death-defying circus performers, women cyclists and their impact on history (most notably, the invention of bloomers).

The book is illustrated with drawings and photographs from Geist's personal collection and the Bicycle Hall of Fame in Virginia, and is the most complete history of bicycling to date. It includes poems by enthusiasts and prose by Mark Twain, but best of all is the "art gallery " of works varying in style from Currier & Ives to Picasso.

Frenzied Form

This past summer Alicia Alonso's Ballet Nacional de Cuba visited our country for the first time, and audiences at New York's Metropolitan Opera House and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., immediately recognized it to be one of the world's major ballet companies.

The dancing of the corps in *Giselle*, as the band of ghostly Wilis, was not only a stunning model of precision but also a quite unparalleled revelation of dance drama. One might find fault with some of the contemporary choreography that permits frenzy to replace form, but Alberto Mendez is a choreographer of great imagination. As for Miss Alonso herself, she remains one of the great Giselles of this century. Her dancing of Mendez's breathtaking *La Peri* epitomizes Romantic age ballet. Right now Alonso and her superb company are appearing in Havana at the huge international dance festival, but if Havana isn't in your November travel plans, be sure you don't miss them when they return to our shores next summer.

Steven Caras

Non-Runners Arise

You say your Nikes feel like lead-lined space boots and you can't seem to break that eight-minute mile? You may be a prime candidate for a new sport that's sweeping the nation: non-running.

Actually, the sport isn't at all new. According to Lew Grossberger and Vic Ziegel, it has been around since time began, only coming into vogue around the turn of the 20th century, when Grover Cleveland coined its official motto: "I do not choose to run." Grossberger and Ziegel, authors of *The Non-Runner's Handbook* (Macmillan), have made a thorough study of this pleasurable pastime, and have found that an astonishingly high number of Americans—180 million to be exact—practice non-running every day. The sport's popularity could be due to the fact that you can non-run anywhere, at any time.

Included in *The Non-Runner's Handbook* are little-known facts about famous non-runners and some exciting new techniques, such as sitting, napping, and Popsicle-licking. It even tells you how to avoid the Boston Marathon. So toss out those gold lamé shorts and chuck that $40 pair of iron maidens.

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DANCE

Nureyev at Forty

by Walter Terry

I'M 40 YEARS OLD," said Rudolf Nureyev. "It's time to indulge, to be foolish if I wish. Now, at this moment in my career, I can afford to fall flat on my face—or my ass—or whatever." The world's most famous dancer was referring to the fact that he had invited the harshest possible criticism by dancing *Le Spectre de la Rose* and *Scheherazade*, two historic ballets associated with the greatest male dancer of an earlier era, Vaslav Nijinsky, who had danced both classics when he was 21.

Nureyev was in fact lambasted by a few critics during his recent extensive tour with London Festival Ballet, but the public itself had no doubts, for the dance idol performed to full houses with long lines of fans waiting at the box offices.

But this "moment" in Nureyev's unparalleled career of not only enduring but growing popularity means more to him than dancing the legendary and, therefore, challenging roles of Nijinsky. "In 1840," he said, "Dobro Liubov, a Russian philosopher-writer-critic, presented some rather deep discussions on the differences between beauty and prettiness, and he said he wished that everything could stop for a moment of beauty. Today, at 40, I feel that this is my moment of inner beauty. I even feel vindicated in having done what I have done and am doing. There is something in the air. . . . " And then with uproarious laughter he quipped, "But maybe I'm being an *old* fool!

"Let me give you another thought. It is a maxim of Bournonville [August Bournonville, the great 19th-century Danish choreographer], who said that something—I forget what—was good but that intoxication was bad. Well, I feel intoxicated now. For me, it is good. This is my life.

"Why do I dance so much when I don't have to? Some people say that I should retire, that I'm rich. But I think there is joy in dancing—that's why I give so many performances. I hate inactivity. I hate sitting on stage as I must do on the throne in the third act of *Swan Lake*; so I insist on every dance passage possible."

It is not only the body that Nureyev exercises remorselessly. His mind, in my opinion, is as remarkable an instrument of his artistic expression as his totally disciplined yet feral dancing body. I read him a passage from *Lettres sur la Danse et les Ballets*, by Jean Georges Noverre, the 18th-century ballet master, innovator, reformer: "In order that our art may arrive at that degree of the sublime which I demand and hope for it, it is imperative for dancers to divide their time and studies between the mind and the body. . . . Intelligence and taste do not reside in the feet." I asked him if he would "pontificate" on this directive, still pertinent after the passage of two centuries. He laughed. "What do you expect from a poor little dancer from the outer steppes! How can I best describe the more-than-technique of an artist?

"Three years ago, when I was with the Martha Graham company, two dancers attracted my attention. Let's call them Mr. A and Mr. B. Our Mr. B had fantastic technique—the things he could do were spectacular, acrobatic. Mr. A didn't have that kind of technique or as good a body. He wasn't as young and his personality wasn't as lively. All this I saw in rehearsal. Then we came on stage in performance and against my will, my eyes were drawn from Mr. B, for I could see that Mr. A had knowledgeable eyes that sent messages of movement before he actually moved. In a sense, he prefaced a movement before he sent it into space. For me, he was the winner.

"When I first studied in Leningrad, I was always concerned with the 'whys' as much as the 'hows.' I wanted to know *why* you should do this or that and *what* makes this or that happen." The Nureyev body was trained at the Kirov school, in classical ballet, in historical dances (pavanes, branles, gavottes), in folk dances, mime, fencing (with foils, blades, scimitars, daggers, and the manipulation of capes); but the Nureyev mind was also exposed to history, literature, mathematics, chemistry, languages, and, of course, music.

"Music," he says, "is really *the* friend, the companion, and even the pest because it is ever-present. Music talks to me. I talk back. There is no intermediate person between us. And, of course, it talks to me through rhythm. It's a very jealous person.

"When I am away from New York, where sometimes people are less attentive to me, I can retire into my books. I can again attack Byron, which can be very exciting; I am reading him nonstop. I find him more difficult than Shakespeare. I've read two-thirds of *Childe Harold* but I just couldn't finish it; I'll be back to it later. I found *Manfred* a pompous bore, but then I read *Don Juan*, so lively, so witty. Byron is my most favorite English author."

Nureyev's first choreographing of an original full-length ballet was inspired by another Englishman, Shakespeare. Nureyev had already restaged such classics as Marius Petipa's *Don Quixote*, but the choreography for *Romeo and Juliet* (to the Prokofiev ballet score) was totally his own. Curiously, critics, the public, and those closely associated with drama found it more Shakespearean, more Elizabethan, than the most famous choreographic versions of the play—Sir Frederick Ashton's for the Royal Danish Ballet, John Cranko's for the Stuttgart Ballet, Kenneth MacMillan's for Britain's Royal Ballet (all British choreographers), and Leonid Lavrovsky's for the Kirov and Bolshoi ballets. How could a man of Tartar heritage come so close to capturing an earlier English age? "Because I read *the words* of Shakespeare. Because I asked questions about words, about some that were stumbling blocks for me. I think I must have asked everyone I knew what each word meant. Many of the words are angular, very strong and powerful, but I think today's readers have forgotten what they originally meant. Their brains have been reprocessed by the Victorian Age, and they've blocked out basic meanings."

And so Nureyev's ballet of *Romeo and Juliet* shocked some with its "angular power," with its easy juxtaposition of tenderness and violence, with its natural bawdiness, and with a lust for life matched by a disregard for death. But as produced for and by the London Festival Ballet, it has been a mighty box-office hit and, in my opinion, a most important ballet by the most important male ballet star of our era.

Nureyev, as mentioned earlier, also generated critical controversy when he elected to dance roles originated by and identified with Nijinsky. Nureyev wanted to revive the ballets for his appearances and tours with the London Festival Ballet, one of the many internationally famous companies (the American Ballet Theatre, the Royal Ballet, the Dutch National Ballet, Canada's

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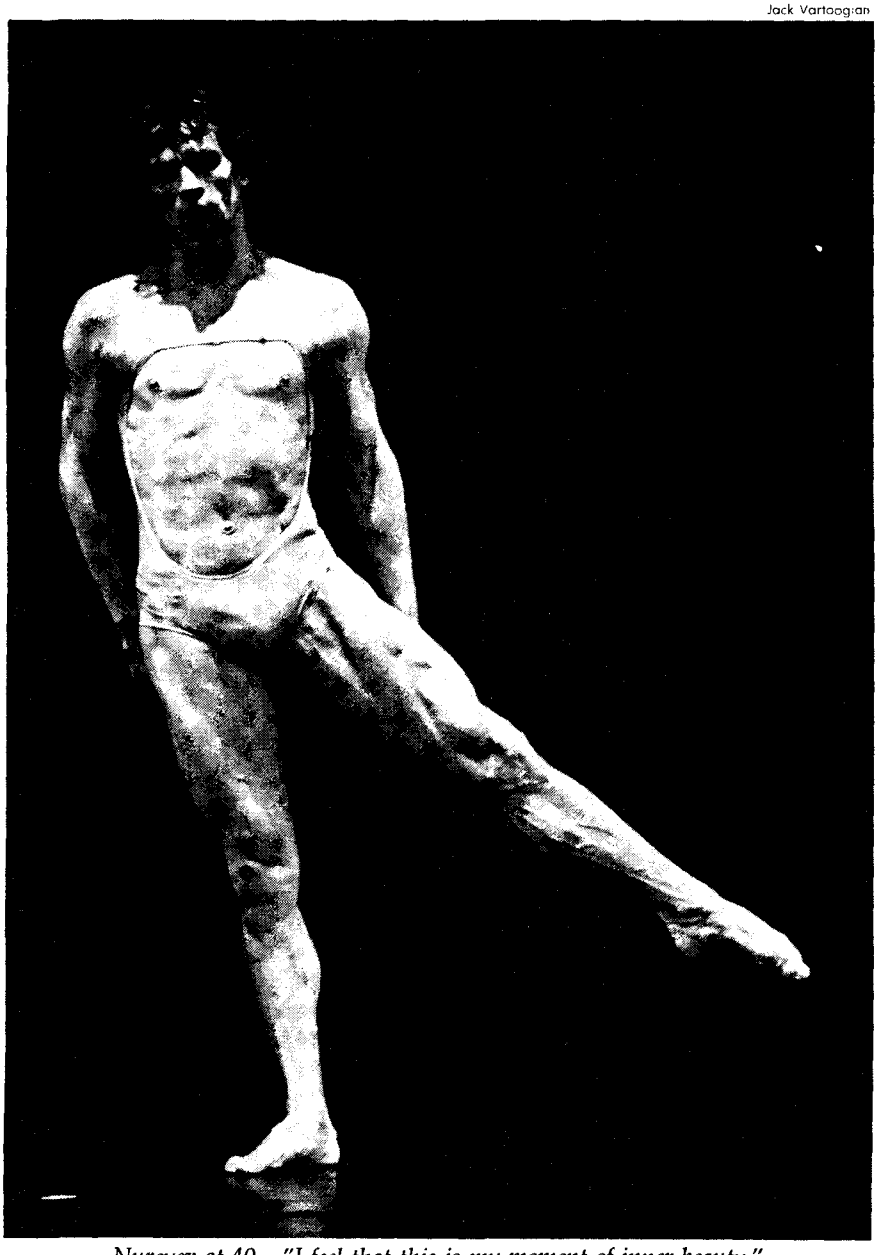
Jack Vartoogian



Nureyev at 40—"I feel that this is my moment of inner beauty."

National Ballet, the Australian Ballet are some of the others) with which he dances as guest star. But he did not approach Nijinsky's roles with either bravado or arrogance. "Quite a few years ago Erik Bruhn urged me not to do anything of Nijinsky's. And I agreed with him because I had seen a bad performance of *Spectre*. I thought the Nijinsky ballets should probably remain history. And I refused to play Nijinsky in a film. I like to think my instinct has never been wrong. Now, however, I can afford to be foolish. But is it foolish? It is not easy, though it is possible, to be 19 or 20 at 40. Look at Margot Fonteyn. When we first danced together she was 44, and I was 20 years younger. It didn't matter. And Ulanova: Have you ever seen a younger Juliet? Yet when she danced it in the West she was 50 and gray-haired with no makeup. With Nijinsky, I feel an admiration, a genuine compassion. I study photographs of him whenever I can. I see, of course, his plasticity. Look at him with Pavlova—see how he offers his hand and how he tilts his neck toward her. Look at that instinctive sense of line, how it parallels, complements hers. It's as if he were a painter. But I see also his absolute lack of fear and I see too in those photos that he is totally engulfed in his characterization. Incredible!

"Some of the critics say I do not do something 'authentic' or that I take liberties with the classics. Do they know Nijinsky better than I? Have they studied him? They *look* at the poses in his photographs. I look too—but I can *feel* the movements that led into those poses and flow out of them, for I am a dancer."

Nureyev does indeed appear to change passages in the traditional ballets. But perhaps he actually rediscovers some things that have been lost. One of the most beautiful solos he has created is a soliloquy for *Swan Lake*. A meditation—which he has compared to Hamlet's "To be or not to be"—it is not a spectacular dance; it is slow, sustained, with lingering balances and almost slow-motion turns. It is far more difficult than, say, the Prince's bravura variation and coda in "The Black Swan" *pas de deux* later in the ballet. (The audience does not recognize that the choreography is difficult because it is legato rather than brio-staccato.) In Nureyev's version, it becomes the key statement to the Prince's character, to his discontent, to his searching for he knows not what. "I choreographed it first when I was 23, and it brought down on my head a long, angry 'How dare he!' But I ask you to listen to the music of the *pas de trois* that comes before. Did you ever hear of a *pas de trois* with *four* solos? And one of them a solo that is a totally different mood from the dances by the Prince's friends? No, it belongs to the Prince.

"'The Black Swan' choreography is very Germanic, very square, very regimented, and the mood of the Prince is optimistic. But the meditation is different. All his doubts are contained in it as sadness overcomes him. Psychologically, a chimera is in him to be danced out. I have danced it for 17 years now, and the mood of it still possesses me."

It has been the instinct, the drive, the purpose, and perhaps even the wisdom of Rudolf Nureyev to reach beyond the limits of historicity, authenticity, convention that define boundaries, for he regards boundaries as frontiers to be crossed. As he has said, "I cannot sit. I must dance. I must reach for those new and newer and still newer levels of exultation." His reach, if it has not borne him beyond this world as the Prince's reach takes him in *Swan Lake*, has extended around this world and made it his captive. And if I may beg the indulgence of my readers, I would like to quote from my first review of a dazzling newcomer to the world's dance scene. It was March of 1962, and Nureyev had made his New York debut in a single *pas de deux* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. I needed to see no more in order to write, "This is an artist, already brilliant, on the threshold of what could be the most phenomenal dance career of our age." ◉

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TELEVISION

The HUT of Darkness

by Karl E. Meyer

ONE MIGHT SUPPOSE that a prolonged newspaper strike would be a windfall for television, since readers, starved for news and entertainment, would turn to the knob in record numbers. But this assumption, however reasonable, appears to be plain wrong. Despite a press blackout in New York City during most of August, there were seemingly fewer New Yorkers watching television than in the same month the year before. Not even news programs gained in ratings. It is a wonderfully mystifying phenomenon, reducing the glibbest of researchers to stuttering incoherence.

The figures that have brought this disturbing news are those known acronymically as HUT (Homes Using Television). For some time, from the vantage of the television industry, HUT has been misbehaving. In the summer of 1977, there was a marked decline nationally in homes using television, and that dip was variously blamed on good weather and the absence of exciting news. Thus this past August's further decline in New York HUT—in the very face of a newspaper strike that closed the city's three major dailies—is all the more remarkable.

During the week of July 16 to 21, for example, New York HUT figures were rising during prime time at about a 3 percent average rate over the same period the year before. On August 9, the newspaper strike began—and during the week of August 19 to 25, the overnight HUT figures fell by roughly the same percentage as the earlier gain. The regional loss that week was more than twice the national decrease of 1.3 percent. A glance at the weekday New York HUT ratings for the 6-to-7-PM period, when news programs dominate the air, showed a decline of about 3 percent during August 21 to 25.

Why? The analyst of a major local station told me that "there must be special factors—an equipment malfunction in the ratings apparatus, or a turnover in the sample, for instance. Also, in August there is an abundance of repeat programming. People want to enjoy the weather. Besides, there was little news of the kind that directly affects people's lives."

I do not find this persuasive. August was abnormally productive of news: the election of a new Pope, preparations for the Camp David summit talks, the first transatlantic crossing by balloon, an unprecedented recall election of a Cleveland mayor, a revolution in Nicaragua. In New York, there were gubernatorial and congressional primary campaigns, and a sharp rise in Wall Street share values. And these are but a few of the news events. As for the weather, most of August was exceptionally muggy, a circumstance that usually encourages home viewing—especially when there is a Yankee-Red Sox divisional title race as torrid as any in memory.

What the station analyst left out of his reckoning was the void on the newsstand. Without real newspapers (as opposed to such throwaway strike tabloids as *City News* and *Metro*), I would suggest, people not only don't know what is happening but even cease to ask. Television news is a reinforcement, not a substitute, for headlines glimpsed during the day.

The handful of improvised tabloids that came into existence during the newspaper strike and out-of-town dailies that were imported by resourceful vendors did not fill the void. The strike papers were crammed with wire-copy and boiler-plate features edited with neither distinction nor authority. One became aware, in particular, of how crucially dependent television news is on *The New York Times*, which provides the nearest thing to a yardstick for significance.

During the strike, all local stations increased the time for news programming, but in effect what we got was a flood of repetitious bulletins. Without the *Times*, coverage of the Camp David talks was shallow and platitudinous; both the networks and local programs dwelled endlessly on the difficulty of covering the story—the last refuge of the baffled journalist.

I think the New York strike demonstrated that television is reliant on print in quite subtle ways. Television disseminates, but print validates. If it is not on paper, it has not really happened. Consider, to cite a final example, the unfortunate personages, such as the legendary publicist Benjamin Sonnenberg, who happened to die during the newsprint blackout. Most local TV news editors, I suspect, had never heard of him, and they didn't have the *Times* to explain who he was, or to describe his fabled Gramercy Park townhouse. (Sonnenberg once memorably described his success as consisting of providing large pedestals for small statues, and his clients ranged from would-be movie stars to great corporations.) I learned of Sonnenberg's death at age 77 thanks only to an encomium by a *Times* reporter on Channel 13, the public television station. How apt that through his death Sonnenberg confirmed, if in a negative way, that though the tube may reign, newsprint still rules. ◉

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What's Cooking?

"Inspecting Mushrooms" (1974) is one of many etchings Günter Grass did while writing The Flounder.

The Flounder
by Günter Grass
Translated by Ralph Manheim
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 544 pp., $12

Reviewed by John Simon

THE FLOUNDER is even more epic in conception, if not in scale, than Günter Grass's previous big novels. The theme is nothing less than the history of man and woman from the Stone Age to the present, for which the future (if there is one) will doubtless come up with a suitably dismal appellation. The history of man and woman, then, pursued in leaps that land on some of the more characteristic squares of Teutonic and world history, but in which one is never home free. History viewed chiefly from two vantage points: that of food and that of skirmishings between the sexes. Cooking and sexuality, from which derive all family, cultural, and ultimately even political relationships.

Underlying this schema is the famous fairy tale recorded by the Brothers Grimm, "The Fisherman and His Wife." When the fisherman catches a talking flounder, he heeds the fish's plea and lets him go, only to be rebuked back home by his shrewish wife Ilsebill, who insists he should have made the enchanted fish fulfill some wishes for him. Against the fisherman's own misgivings, he conveys Ilsebill's wishes to the flounder, and though they become more and more outrageous, the flounder fulfills them. When Ilsebill wants to be God, however, the flounder has had enough and returns everything to where it began: The fisherfolk are back in their wretched hovel known as the Pisspot.

The unnamed narrator of *The Flounder*—who indicates by many unmistakable hints that he is, at least in part, Günter Grass, and whom I shall take the liberty of calling G.G.—is married to a typical contemporary feminist, also named Ilsebill. As the book begins, the couple has just finished a meal that G.G. has cooked and verbally evoked with equal skill; now Ilsebill wants them to have intercourse, for she is sure that tonight she will conceive. And what Ilsebill wants, she gets.

In the new version of the tale, which G.G. narrates to his wife, we start in the age of cooked food, the Neolithic,

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with Edek, a Stone-Age man, happy in the polyandrous and polygynous matriarchy ruled by Awa, the three-breasted tribal cook and, therefore, priestess. Edek catches a flounder on the spot where Danzig will someday rise, and it is the Flounder who, in exchange for his liberty, proceeds to instruct him. The finny philosopher (who may be Hegel's *Weltgeist*, God, or whatever passes for him) weans Edek from Awa's three teats that have constantly suckled him even as an adult. Matriarchy must yield to the new patriarchal world order of male exploration, science, art, big business, war, and, above all, supremacy. To the women will fall religion (especially the convent), prostitution, marriage and motherhood, romantic love, and above all, cookery. It is hardly a fair division, and after nigh on four millennia, the Flounder lets himself be caught again by three lesbian feminists who arrange to have him tried by a feminist tribunal in Berlin as chief agent of the male supremacist cause. As a confessed sinner, the Flounder hopes to be pardoned and become adviser, henceforth, only to the women.

The book is also an account of the nine (or 11) female cooks who live inside G.G.'s consciousness and who have to be set free, complete with detailed accounts of some of their best recipes. These women, after the Stone-Age Awa, are the Bronze-Age Wigga, from whom a precursor of G.G. tries vainly to escape during the era of migrations; next, the 10th-century Mestwina of the period when the Pomorshians (the people living in the area of the future Danzig, which is Grass's hometown, and whose history the novel also covers) are converted to Christianity by Bishop Adalbert, who is also an avatar of G.G.

G.G. appears in the lives of all these women, as father, husband, or, most often, lover. At times he is all three simultaneously; we are not dealing with strict reincarnation here, but with a multiple subdivision and recurrence of G.G. as the male principle down the ages, even as Ilsebill is in some indefinable way all the women in the book—even, so to speak, the ones she is not. Thus G.G. is also the swordsmith husband of the High Gothic Dorothea, the 14th-century mystic and penitent, who listlessly bears him daughter after daughter while her heart is in every kind of self-mortification (including a steady diet of Lenten cooking) and eventual self-immurement in Danzig's cathedral.

Other cooks of G.G.'s include the Rabelaisian Abbess Margret (Fat Gret), with whom G.G. dallies as various figures of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation; the gentle kitchen-maid Agnes who, in the burgeoning Baroque, cooks for and cohabits alternately with the painter Moller and the poet Opitz, both of them historical figures and both previous manifestations of G.G. Later . . . but I cannot list all the forms Ilsebill takes, and still less all those that G.G. lays claim to. Suffice it to say that all major historical periods and sociopolitical phenomena enter into this tale of food and sex and power struggle through the ages. Significantly, no matter how repressed women are in any given time, they manage—usually through cookery—to control their men: to subjugate and manipulate them, sometimes to keep them alive in adversity, sometimes to kill them in jealousy or injured pride. Food becomes both sexualized and politicized, the cook often giving history a nudge in this or that direction, although ultimately "history does not take a different course, but the usual bad one."

There are nine principal women in G.G.'s historical past, as well as two more, for good measure, in the near past and present. Those figures, nine and 11, recur throughout the three levels of the work: the Flounder's trial in a converted Berlin movie theater nicknamed the Pisspot (the same as the fisherfolk's cottage in the fairy tale); the troubled relationship of G.G. and Ilsebill during her pregnancy; and the march of cookery through our civilization. Thus the book is in nine sections, for the nine months of Ilsebill's pregnancy and the nine months of the Flounder's trial. There are also nine judges—11, counting the defender and the prosecutor—at the trial, as well as nine in-fighting women's organizations. There are nine Muses corresponding to the nine women who inspire G.G. through the ages; Dorothea bears him nine daughters; as Frederick the Great's inspector, he incurs nine wounds; Fat Gret can pluck nine or 11 geese in one day; at the conclusion of the Flounder's trial, the Women's Tribunal holds a banquet for which first nine, then 11, flatfish are ordered and consumed; as part of men's cultural achievement, nine symphonies are adduced; and so on and on.

What is this? Is Grass trying simply to outdo Dante's use of the Christian mystical number nine in the *Vita nuova* and *The Divine Comedy*? Or is he just playing games? I think it is actually part of his basic technique, which relies both on flashbacks and flashforwards, and even more on a method of simul-

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taneity and correspondences, to demonstrate that all time is of a piece, and that various periods are only like so many transparent spheres within other spheres revolving and interacting. "On our paper," G.G. the writer says to a painter friend, "most things take place simultaneously." Take this enchanting example: "Ilsebill ... found a solitary cep, which was so big that we looked in vain for something to compare it with, until Sophie, in the adjoining forest but just two centuries earlier, found an even bigger one...."

The concept of *The Flounder* is both gigantic and detailed; it is to the execution's credit that, in so many ways, it comes up to the concept. There are, to be sure, interpolated poems that do not seem to me to live up to, and thus advance the cause of, the prose; and even the prose occasionally falls off. The complex structure and episodic nature of the work might militate against total emotional involvement on the reader's part, yet such is Grass's imaginative power and stylistic variety and verve that even episodicity ceases to be a serious drawback. One must admire the author's voracity—only a man who adores food could acquire such lexical knowledge of cookery and put it to such eloquent use; and be awed by his omnivorousness, for countless other subjects are absorbed and put to imaginative work with like gusto.

A whole spectrum of languages—from Gothic doggerel to the latest megalopolitan slang—is handled by Grass with equal assurance. This makes enormous demands on the translator, and, on the whole, Ralph Manheim has met them with sympathetic inventiveness and, undoubtedly, unsparing dedication. This makes the occasional lapses that my spot checks revealed all the more mysterious. Why should a harvest that turned out favorably (*günstig ausfiel*) be translated as "potential"? Why is *spitzfindig* (cunningly, resourcefully) rendered as "meticulously"? Why do "eccentric" metaphors (*verstiegen*) become "exalted"? Surely *urdumme Kraft* is primevally, not "abysmally," stupid power. "A man buffeting a stormy wind" is nonsense; he can only be buffeted by it. *Auf flachem Land* is nothing so fancy as "in low country," merely on level ground. *In Szene sein* is not "the scenario" but being on the scene.

Altogether, Manheim has a regrettable tendency to lengthen and overexplain what should remain lapidary; when G.G. at a literary gathering wonders "which of the poetesses, circumstances permitting, he'd like to fuck," Manheim turns this into "which of the lady poets he would like to fuck if the opportunity presented itself." Sometimes, too, he misses the joke. In a marvelous section about a socialist congress, Grass describes some delegates as "sparse beards marked with vestiges of the last and the previously last revolutions" (not "next-to-last"); and others are "young, as yet unwritten-up beards" (not "inexperienced" ones). And Grass would never have three though's in four lines, as Manheim has them (the German has one).

But no translator could render in English that quaint mixture of terse elegance and grandiose sesquipedality that German is capable of thanks to its ability to compound words, which Grass further exploits to achieve glittering ironies. Altogether Grass is a master of irony. In a German store selling Indian women's dresses, "the salesgirls, though all of the Hamburg build, moved like temple dancers in their first year of training." A woman throws over G.G. for "a punk... who dropped her soon afterward to study theology at government expense." Yet the same writer is capable of the exquisite delicacy of describing the tormented Opitz waiting quietly by candlelight "for Agnes, the kitchen-maid, who soon came in and made up to him for all, or nearly all, his sorrows." And what of the wistful charm of "the children in the adjoining room could be heard trying to be quiet"?

The Flounder is the first major satirical feminist novel; it is also the first major satirical anti-feminist novel. For in it Grass scrupulously makes both men and women equally ridiculous in their more fanatical isms. Yet in the end Grass gracefully accepts the future as he sees it: the coming of a new age of female hegemony. So throughout it is G.G., not Ilsebill, who does most of the cooking. I wonder whether Grass was also thinking of that German nursery rhyme about Ilse Bilse (Ilsebill) whom no one wanted until the cook (G.G.) came and took her anyway? In the nursery rhyme, he makes her fodder for his stove; in the novel, she becomes food for a great fiction about food—and many other things.

In any case, what really matters is not so much who does the cooking, which can be a joy; but who, even with full automation, will do the damned dishes. As G.G. ruefully remarks to his Ilsebill: "Your turn and my turn refuse to become our turn." Will they ever? ◉

John Simon writes a column on language for Esquire, *is film critic of* National Review *and drama critic of* New York.

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West Coast Literary Lions

Yardbird Lives!
Edited by Ishmael Reed and Al Young
Grove Press, 288 pp., $5.95 paper

Reviewed by Maya Angelou

SOME YEARS AGO, in Berkeley, California, a brash, bristling group of writers, headed by Ishmael Reed and Al Young, set out to show the literary lions of the East Coast that they were not the only kings in the forest. The group's second intention, an even braver challenge, was to show the American public that its cultural landscape was not as pristine as a Wyeth snowfield but was rainbowed with glorious colors.

They founded and published a magazine called *Yardbird Reader*, named for the late brilliant musician Charlie Parker. The editors searched for and assembled an all-cultural squad of contributors who wrote poetry, prose, and drama.

Yardbird Lives! is an anthology of works drawn from the magazine's five-year history.

A rich and well-paced anthology offers the best in private sensuality. A reader can indulge in one author's bitter threnodial prose then in minutes turn a page to the high clear sound of lyrical poetry. A good anthology also introduces little-known but worthy new writers.

Yardbird Lives! succeeds in both areas. Black, Asian, Latino, Native, and white Americans are proffered in a program arranged like a jazz concert. The performances range from standing-ovation excellence to doltish absurdity. The latter is achieved in an adolescent rendering, from first to last word, of the Declaration of Independence, reversed.

Fortunately, excellence predominates. A tone soul paean to a dead Asian father, "All in the Night Without Food," by Shawn Wong, is itself worth the price of the book. Calvin Hernton's side-smiling poetry and Colleen McElroy's lyricism are exquisite.

Claude Brown, in his "In Consequence of Manchild," shows his brilliance and power in a bravura attack on *Esquire* magazine's policy and *Esquire*'s former editor, Harold T. P. Hayes.

There is a short story by Ntozake Shange that would work splendidly as preface to her popularly and critically acclaimed *Colored Girls*. It would also explain what seems to be her disenchantment with men in general and black men in particular.

There are too many contributors to single out each for distinction or criticism, but the overall quality of the work is good and deserving of serious attention from readers. It is a book to cherish, a collection of short stories, essays, and poems to be read again and again.

I would have enjoyed more from Ishmael Reed and Al Young. This time I suppose they decided not to solo, but to step off the platform and allow the band to riff. And that's perfectly all right with me. *Yardbird* lives!

BOATROCKING

By the early 1970s, it was no longer a secret among astute observers that what officially passed for literature in the United States was really only representative of a select monoculture. While it was true, for example, that Afro-American writing (most notably the work of Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin) was again in vogue for a few hot minutes during the passionate Sixties, America's leading literary journals and reviews, by and large, remained partial to the predictable conviction that the only legal imaginative writing that counts and keeps is produced by White Folks exclusively.

Catering to the taste of the times, carpetbagger and well-meaning editors alike peppered their pages with lively invective and spicy slices-of-life from the pens and penknives of so-called ethnic writers. Expensive militants and chic social activists got bookings on late-night TV talk shows where they joked with their hosts and, between commercials, were roundly applauded for their dissenting views.

It was all so titillating at first that it took a while to figure out that this was simply America's subtle but effective way of dealing with boatrockers, particularly those few possessed of any real ideas that might, by some fluke, prove threatening to an unreflective, jaded, consumerist republic devoted to the divine principles of Cash Flow. What you did was to turn it all into entertainment by giving it prime time for a season or two. You flooded the marketplace with fetchingly wrapped messages, you expropriated the gist and glamour of maverick ideas, beefs, lifestyles, and hairdos, along with any salable slogans or catch phrases. In a nutshell, you made certain the populace got its fill, then you watched it all flush cleanly away....

—Al Young
Introduction, *Yardbird Lives!*

Poet and critic Maya Angelou's And Still I Rise *has just been published by Random House.*

FINE PRINT

Southern Portraits

by Doris Grumbach

ALLEN WIER HAS brought off, most successfully, a noteworthy dual event. He has just had his first novel, *Blanco* ($9.95), and his first collection of short stories, *Things About to Disappear* ($10.95), published simultaneously. Of course he is not unique in this: Ann Beattie accomplished a similar feat two years ago when Doubleday brought out her novel, *Chilly Scenes of Winter*, and *Distortions*, a collection of short stories, at the same time. The real surprise of Wier's double-barreled debut is that both books come from a university press, Louisiana State.

University presses haven't indulged, traditionally, in the publication of creative work. They have remained faithful to their original purpose: the production of scholarly monographs and studies too erudite for the general reader. True, there have been exceptions. About 15 years ago some university presses relented a bit and began to issue slim volumes of poetry. And last year the University of Chicago Press published *Carnival*, Isak Dinesen's posthumous stories. And last year Harvard University Press announced that it will begin publishing short novels in an attempt to revive the art.

Louisiana State University Press began its foray into the publishing of fiction last spring with Madison Jones's *Passage Through Gehenna*. The editors declared then that "fiction has become comparatively less profitable and much harder to place with a commercial publishing company than it was a few years ago.... Hence the demonstrable need [for] a university press ... to include novels on its lists."

Young Allen Wier, born in San Antonio, Texas, and now teaching English at Hollins College in Virginia, has benefited from his publisher's high-mindedness. His stories are good but not especially impressive, so *Things About to Disappear* seems to ride on the shoulders of *Blanco*, which is first-rate. Blanco is a small town in Central Texas, not far from "San Antone." In 1959 the Marrs family—whose flat yet terrible life is the substance of the book—consists of Clinton, called Turk, an almost middle-aged man who still lives with his perpetually complaining mother, Eunice, and his sister, June, aged 36, who lives in San Antone and is about to marry a successful real-estate man from Ohio.

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Armon, the father of the family, has been dead a long time; but we come to know him through flashbacks into the collective memories of his family. Minor figures, like Turk's occasional mistress, Sally, occupy the background, but the significant theme always centers on the sad and barren Marrs family.

For more than half the book the novel remains static and descriptive. We watch ordinary people with extraordinarily rich fantasy lives (only later do we realize how much these daydreams border on madness) go about their daily existence. Turk helps out in a gas station, cuts his toenails in his mother's living room while he watches car wrecks on the news, ignoring Eunice's droning on with her complaints. He visits the Bowling Alley Cafe every day for his cups of coffee with his friend Robert Allen. He installs a new henhouse for someone, and cuts the grass in the cemetery now and then. His occasional lovemaking with Sally and the pressure of his talkative, foolish mother are no buffer against his loneliness.

Having given us this vivid portrait of an ordinary man, Wier moves behind June, whose dreams are violent and shocking, but whose outward existence is like her brother's. She dreams that her husband-to-be fastens a collar to her neck and leashes her to a stake in the ground. "The dream ended with June leaning her head down to take a mouthful of the green grass as the fog disappeared and cars passed her on the expressway."

But none of their efforts—sex, marriage, work, friendship, escape into fantasies and dreams—provides connectedness or meaning for Turk or June or Eunice. June becomes Cage's creature and possession, and leads a curious, boxed-in life. Only the garden of her insane imaginings flourishes. Turk sees the gas station being robbed by three Mexicans, gets a gun, shoots them all dead, and then, in the only act of affirmation in his thus far nonevent-ful life, jacks up a car he was supposed to repair, slides under it, and kicks the jack away.

The jack clanged against the concrete. Turk's palm came up beneath the car, his arm on the floor, bent at ninety degrees like a waiter carrying a tray over his head, the bones in his wrist snapping as the car settled onto his chest. His lungs filled with blood, quickly hot, like a bad chest cold or inhaling his first cigarette. When he died, Turk was thinking of motor oil.

At this moment Wier is only halfway through his story. The last half of *Blanco* is full of events set into motion by the violence and horror of Turk's suicide. Even small, accidental episodes are now colored with shock. Turk's funeral procession crosses the carried coffin of old Iron Gertie, a Mexican woman who has died of cancer:

Doctor O'Connor just sewed her back up. Tumor big around as an avocado. Hard, dark green. The bulges of body, big cheeks, wide, flared nostrils, bulging knot of black hair, breasts, belly, huge thighs and calves pulled in tight behind smooth, worn knees, her excess flesh tucked and held behind those knees like stuffing pulled into the shape of a star beneath the button in a mattress. Gertie should have had a coffin at least as big as a double bed. Did all the air go out of her when she died? Did they lay her, coiled up upon her shriveled self, in the corner of her coffin?

The novel ends in a great crescendo. June, imagining the manner of Cage's death (he will choke on a piece of food, she thinks), slides into madness and drives her Thunderbird into the pink-lighted window of her own house: "And like a bright moving snake finally working free of its old dead skin and darting onto new spring grass, its senses awake to new life, June stared ahead and raced on into new territory."

A deeply stirring novel about the large tragedies of lonely, empty, unrealized lives, *Blanco*, as I have said, overshadows by its verbal force and conceptual power the slighter short stories in *Things About to Disappear*. But still, some of them are memorable. Whether Wier is writing about the solitary Emery who finds and cherishes a dead baby ("A Need for Grief"), or about the Indian whose lonely life ends in a close alliance with no more companionship than that of his radio and a gospel-singing program in Des Moines ("Cambell Oakley's Gospel Sun"), or about Willis, a caretaker in a cavern ("A Love Affair With the Underground"), his theme is the same: loneliness and the madness that lurks just under the mask of commonality. His sympathy for the barren fates of his characters is profound but unsentimental, his ability to bring them to life of a very high order.

Harry Crews is to my mind one of the most consistently interesting novelists now writing. I thought of him as I read Allen Wier because he is a fellow Southerner. Crews, the son of a sharecropper, grew up in Georgia, among superstitious people with fine memories. He writes of them in his new book, *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place* (Harper & Row, $8.95): "Nothing is allowed to die in a society of story-telling people."

Those readers who are fortunate enough to know Crews's fiction—such unforgettable books as *Car*, *The Gospel Singer*, *The Gypsy's Curse*, and most recently, *A Feast of Snakes*—are aware that he saw and heard enough from his people in Bacon County, Georgia, to give his work its bizarre, mad, violent, and tragic quality. He has a sympathy for maimed and deformed characters, a love of strange situations, and the talent to make it all, somehow, entirely believable.

A Childhood would appear to be the first part of his autobiography. It takes him to his tenth year, during which time his "daddy" dies, his mother marries his father's brother, another "daddy," who drinks and is brutal, but treats him well. He and his black friend Willalee "live" in the Sears Roebuck catalog that they call their wish book. At five, Harry decides to become a preacher, is struck down with a paralyzing disease from which he gradually recovers, tries to mount a girl after watching farm animals, sleepwalks, falls into a boiling vat during a hog killing and is almost scalded to death. He learns all there is to know about snakes, mules, raising tobacco, human cruelty, and the love that is possible only for one's kin. "It was a world in which survival depended on raw courage, a courage born out of desperation and sustained by a lack of alternatives."

A Childhood is a welcome book for Crews aficionados, a necessary book to introduce newcomers to the *oeuvre* of a storytelling master. ◉

"See?"

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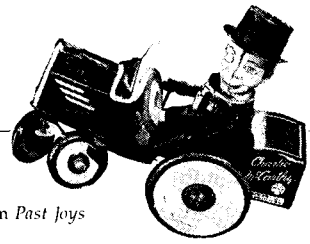
TRADE WINDS

Paperbacks in Bloom

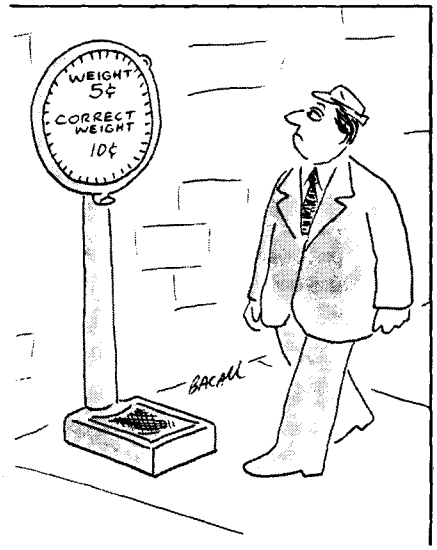


From *Past Joys*

by Walter Arnold

THE MOST EXCITING, controversial, and attractive area of American book publishing today is that of the quality or trade paperbacks. Close to 10,000 new titles come out each year, and they account for a steadily growing share of the nearly 500,000,000 paperback books of all kinds sold here annually. They are approaching parity with the total yearly number of hardcover books sold. The following, among many others, have already sold well over 100,000 copies: *The Joy of Sex, Foxfire 4, Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, Crockett's Victory Garden, The Serial, The New Games Book,* and *Shyness* (sic!). In certain categories, such as the large and thriving one of religious books, quality paperback sales are *four times* those of hardcover. Loretta Barrett, head of Doubleday's Anchor paperback line, says, "It seems inevitable that trade paperbacks will dominate publishing within 10 years." And Lawrence Hughes, president of William Morrow, says flatly that by the turn of the century trade paperbacks will have taken the place of hardcover books in the general market.

In case some readers are not quite clear about the distinctions between mass market and quality paperbacks, distinctions that are in fact becoming blurred, the latter are usually kaleidoscopically colored and designed books and come in all sorts of formats, with prices ranging from $2.95 to $12.95 but averaging around $6. (Hardcover prices now *average* a staggering $17.50; mass-market paperbacks, $2.25.) The "quality" does not refer to the book's literary merit (plenty of works by first-rate and serious writers are in mass-market editions), but to the generally higher-quality paper and other manufacturing standards of the book. The label "trade" comes from these paperbacks being sold, like most hardcover books, primarily in regular bookstores and other hardcover outlets, whereas mass-market paperbacks are marketed primarily in stores where periodicals and other "fast turnover" items are sold. Also, mass-market paperbacks are mainly reprints of previously successful hardcover books and are predominantly works of fiction. Trade paperbacks are overwhelmingly nonfiction (though the amount of original fiction, including first novels, published in this form will surely be increasing), and a high percentage of these are original or published simultaneously with cloth editions.



Walk into any well-stocked general or paperback bookstore one of these days and look around. The array of quality paperbacks makes a dazzling and almost vertiginous new world. (They constitute a permanent and movable revolution generated, ironically, in the "quiescent" Fifties.) You will see there a spectrum ranging from Little, Brown's splendid reissues in pure text of the novels of Evelyn Waugh to Chronicle Books of San Francisco's stunning oblong, full-color album, *Past Joys*, of popular toys from the Twenties, Thirties, and Forties photographed in perfect Proustian settings. In between, so to speak, you will find such stand-outs as *The Parents' Yellow Pages, The Letters of Virginia Woolf, The Hog Book*, the works of Martin Heidegger, *Arsenal of Democracy: American Weapons Available for Export, Saul Steinberg*, and *The Honeymooners' Companion*. Practically every hardcover publisher has a growing line of quality paperbacks, either under the parent name (Dutton, Norton, Houghton Mifflin, Macmillan) or another imprint (Viking/Penguin; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Harvest; Random House/Vintage; Harper & Row / Torchbooks; Farrar, Straus & Giroux / Noonday). An increasing number of smaller houses publish paperbacks exclusively—such as Dover with its encyclopedic reprint line, Workman with its sprightly graphic and games books, and Nitty Gritty with its delightful food books.

At the same time, especially in view of apparently static or declining sales in their primary market, all the major mass-market paperbackers are stepping up production of quality-type paperbacks. They all have such lines or sub-imprints now: Avon (Discus Books), Pocket (Wallaby and the just-announced Quokka Books), New American Library (Mentor and Meridian), Ballantine, Bantam, and Fawcett. In the last five years the sales of these publishers' "non-rack" size, large-format (and usually heavily illustrated) books—*The Best of Life, The People's Almanac, The Sword of Shannara*, to name a few—which are essentially trade paperbacks, increased a spectacular 1,576%. But I think we will certainly be seeing more quality paperbacks from most publishers in coming years. I note that E.P. Dutton's lead paperback title in their fall general book catalog, which incidentally has more new paperbacks in it than hardcover books, is *The Book of Conquests*, a lavishly and fantastically illustrated translation from the Gaelic of an early Irish myth cycle. Probably the crossing of the lines between mass and trade is going to increase, with a consequent heating up of competition, coming chiefly from the mass-market side. The obvious danger here, aside from a sure rise in quality paperback cover prices, is duplication of titles.

For the time being, however, the hardcover is still the Platonic form of the book and constitutes a kind of ruling elite. It is still the most lasting and aesthetically satisfying embodiment of an author's work. As a gift and for a permanent library, personal or public, the hardcover is indispensable. As Peter Mayer, the astute and mercurial former head of Avon and Pocket Books, says, "Trade paperbacks with their bright future still must prove that they have a different distribution capability to accompany their attractive intermediate pricing. And they have to prove how large their readership is, to the extent that it is different from cloth, book clubs, direct mail, and mass market." Right now quality paperbacks make an English garden of luxuriant, colorful, and somewhat disorderly growth around the castle keep of the hardcover. But while the garden is growing, *Floreat*! ◉

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Wit Twister No. 130

Edited by Arthur Swan

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash within a blank corresponds to a letter of the word.

Provisioned, __ __ __ __ __
__, and briefed on plan and route,
The lad from __ __ __ __ __
__ a green, untried recruit,
Rode off alone, __ __ __ __ __
__ up by zeal and pride.
To find the fort where once two __
__ __ __ __ __ died.
Within its walls, his horse __ __
__ __ __ __ and fed,
He slept at last, untroubled by the dead.

A.S.

Fraser Young Literary Crypt No. 119

KPFFAFB AD C JCGY-
FJ ZMAWM FR OCF
CNNYWJD JR XYDKA-
DY LPJ MY JMCJ AD
ZAJMRPJ AJ.

—DZANJ

Answers next issue

California Wines *from page 48*

Stag's Leap Wine Cellars are the superstars of the wine boom. Perhaps the most important development in the wine country has been the appearance of a host of humbler wines (see box), simple reds and whites that are made for everyday drinking but maintain a very high quality.

Wines such as Robert Mondavi's Red Table Wine, Fetzer Vineyards Mendocino Premium Red, and Franciscan Vineyards Burgundy are in this category. They all sell for under $3 and will probably introduce more people to the pleasures of California wine than any rare and exquisite cabernet.

We in America are still amateurs when it comes to wine consumption: We imbibe about a gallon and a half per capita per year, compared to 30 gallons per capita for the French and Italians. Some people who are supposed to know about such things tell us that we will be putting away about nine gallons each by 1990. If the current ratios still apply, about six of those gallons will be from California. That means the Californians will have to produce well over a billion gallons a year. If anyone can do it, they can. ◉

Wine Talk, *a collection of Frank Prial's wine columns, has just been published by Quadrangle/New York Times.*

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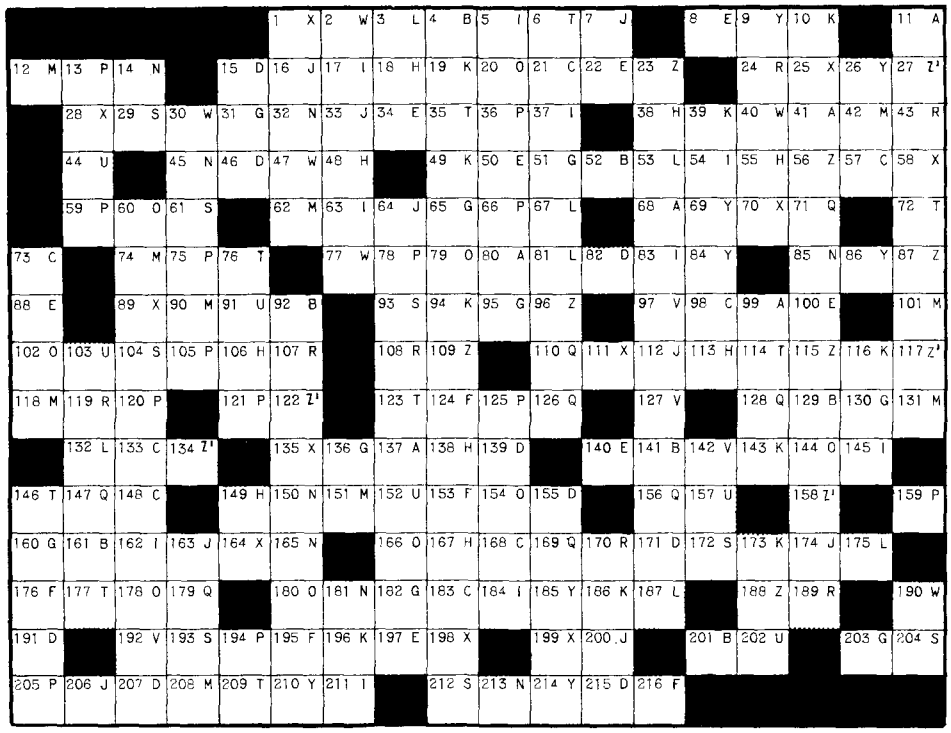
DOUBLE-CROSTIC

Number 159

by Thomas H. Middleton



Instructions:

If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle. Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.

The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.

The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.

Answer to ***Double-Crostic 158*** appears on page 6.

CLUES	WORDS
A. Metal in thin sheets	11 41 68 80 99 137
B. Vesalius's specialty	141 161 201 4 52 92 129
C. Development	133 168 21 57 73 148 183 98
D. Dry up	215 139 155 171 207 15 46 82 191
E. Appeal, plea	197 22 34 88 140 8 50 100
F. "Lithuanians and ___ do it" (Cole Porter)	124 153 176 195 216
G. Large genus of widely distributed annual balsaminaceous plants	31 51 65 95 130 136 160 182 203
H. Eccentric piano-playing comedian (1891–1961; *full name*)	38 55 106 138 149 18 48 113 167
I. Fat chance! No way! (4 wds.)	184 211 17 54 83 145 162 5 37 63
J. Constellation, the Serpent Bearer	64 200 16 33 163 174 112 206 7
K. Undecided, unsettled (4 wds.)	186 19 116 173 196 94 10 49 143 39
L. "The Fighting ___": 1943 Navy film	53 67 81 132 175 187 3
M. Half a mo; sec; two shakes of a lamb's tail	74 90 118 62 151 208 12 42 101 131
N. Science of viniculture	213 14 32 85 165 181 45 150
O. Enriching of a musical tone by supplementary vibration	154 166 79 102 144 20 60 180 178
P. Listless, lethargic	36 59 78 13 75 205 105 121 159 194 120 125 66
Q. Ingenuous Al Capp creation (2 wds.)	71 110 156 126 179 128 147 169
R. Living it up; painting the town red (3 wds.)	189 107 119 24 43 108 170
S. Restrained	212 29 93 104 172 193 204 61
T. 1942 film in which Ginger Rogers played a Chicago chorus girl (2 wds.)	6 114 76 209 35 177 123 146 72
U. Concur	44 157 202 91 103 152
V. Scottish inventor (1736–1819) who coined the term *horsepower*	192 127 97 142
W. Weakly	30 40 77 190 47 2
X. Easily decided (comp.)	1 111 58 70 164 198 28 135 25 199 89
Y. Eye; looksee; gander (comp.)	214 185 84 26 210 86 69 9
Z. A slackening or relaxing	115 87 96 23 109 188 56
Z'. Props, braces	122 134 158 27 117

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THE BACK DOOR

Blobbery

IT IS EASY to forget how nutty folks can be. One recent reminder, described in *Time* magazine, is an outfit dubbed New Games Foundation, located in San Francisco. The purpose of this group is to develop and promote noncompetitive games, games in which everybody plays and nobody loses (or wins).

The intent of such games is to excise the trauma of defeat from playtime—to encourage people "to have fun interacting, not to put someone else down." The new games include "vampire blob," a tag game in which "anyone tagged, with a mock bite on the neck, joins hands with the biter and becomes part of the monster; and the lap game, [in which] a crowd forms a ring and everyone sits down simultaneously on the player behind." There are new strains of old chestnuts, such as basketball and baseball, in which the scores of the teams are added together or otherwise manipulated to produce a tie.

While the threat of such new-consciousness gambols' displacing Reggie or Doctor J may be less than dire, their premises are worth dissecting. Because competition (a) encourages antagonism rather than altruism, (b) traumatizes losers (especially habitual losers), and (c) frequently spoils fun by sparking ill feelings between winner and loser, it is deemed unhealthful. Noncompetitive games would afford the gratification of play without the cost.

Like too many Californians, the inventors of these new games assume that the ultimate goal of human activity is to feel good—laid-back, affectionate, peaceful—and that any step to reduce pain is willy-nilly beneficent. Alas for their theory, to "feel good" is not the principal reason people play games. Witness amateur boxing, football, the countless athletes who play despite painful injuries. People play competitive games to test themselves, to validate a sense of worth. Life is complex and confusing; its meaning is obscure. But if you play a game and win, you know that at least you have that much stature, that much comparative value, in the scheme of things.

Man, as has been often observed, is the only game-playing animal. Many species frolic among themselves. Many war among themselves. But none other engages in the strategic ritualized war of competitive games.

In a sense, our heaviest burden as humans—anxiety about the meaning of our lives and the purpose of existence—is also our unique strength. For if we were not anxious about our existential status, we would not feel compelled to prove ourselves by competing against other humans, or natural limitations, or both. We would not feel the need to stretch our brains or muscles, to excel, to build skyscrapers or set records or stage comebacks or sing high C-sharps or do anything except feel good. True, competition breeds pain, trauma, antagonism. Winners require losers. But to protect losers from loss by eliminating competition is to sacrifice the opportunity to excel in the interests of bovine placidity.

When I was in college, students were allowed to take courses on either of two bases: fully graded (from A to E) or pass/fail. The theory behind pass/fail was that students should be motivated by interest in the subject matter rather than by fear of a bad grade. The almost invariable result was that without the grade incentive, everybody including the curious worked and learned less. The trauma of getting a B rather than an A was avoided; so was a good deal of education.

Robert Frost once said that writing free (unmetrical) verse is like playing tennis without a net. In other words, what turned Frost on, what got his poetic juices pumping, was the challenge of wrenching intractable English into resonant metrical patterns.

"Vampire blob" and games like it suck the challenge out of play, as well as the trauma. They replace the need to perform well with the obligation to exist unobtrusively. They reduce humans to, well, blobs. Blobs don't compete, don't try to excel, don't care; don't try to effect change in their world. They don't vote as long as *they* feel good. And if blobs *do* vote, they vote for the pleasing face, the soothing tone, the uncomplicated answer. Blobbery is an infection in the body politic. It should be watched. —CARLL TUCKER

"Sounds more like your right foot if you ask me."

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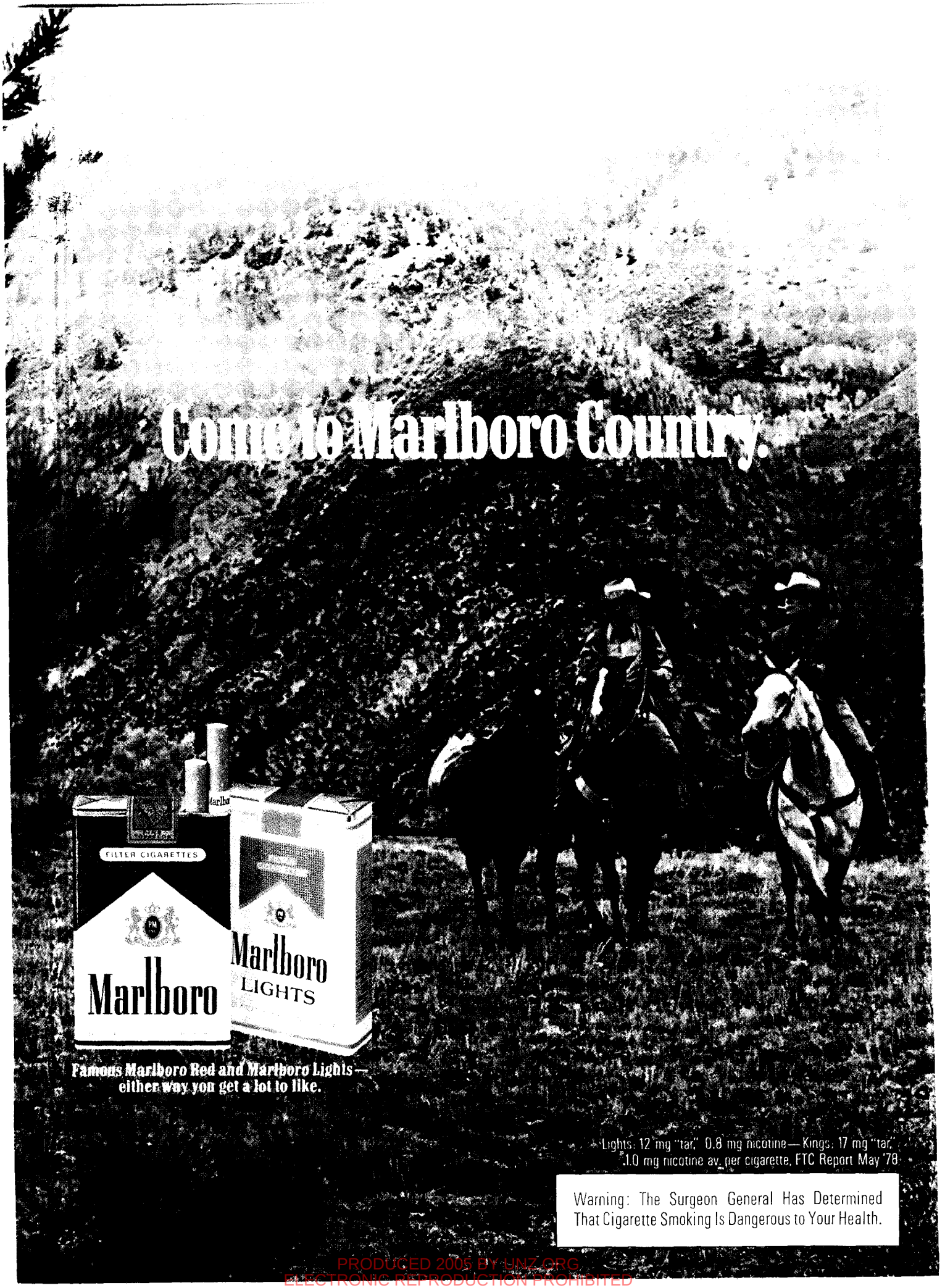
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